



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

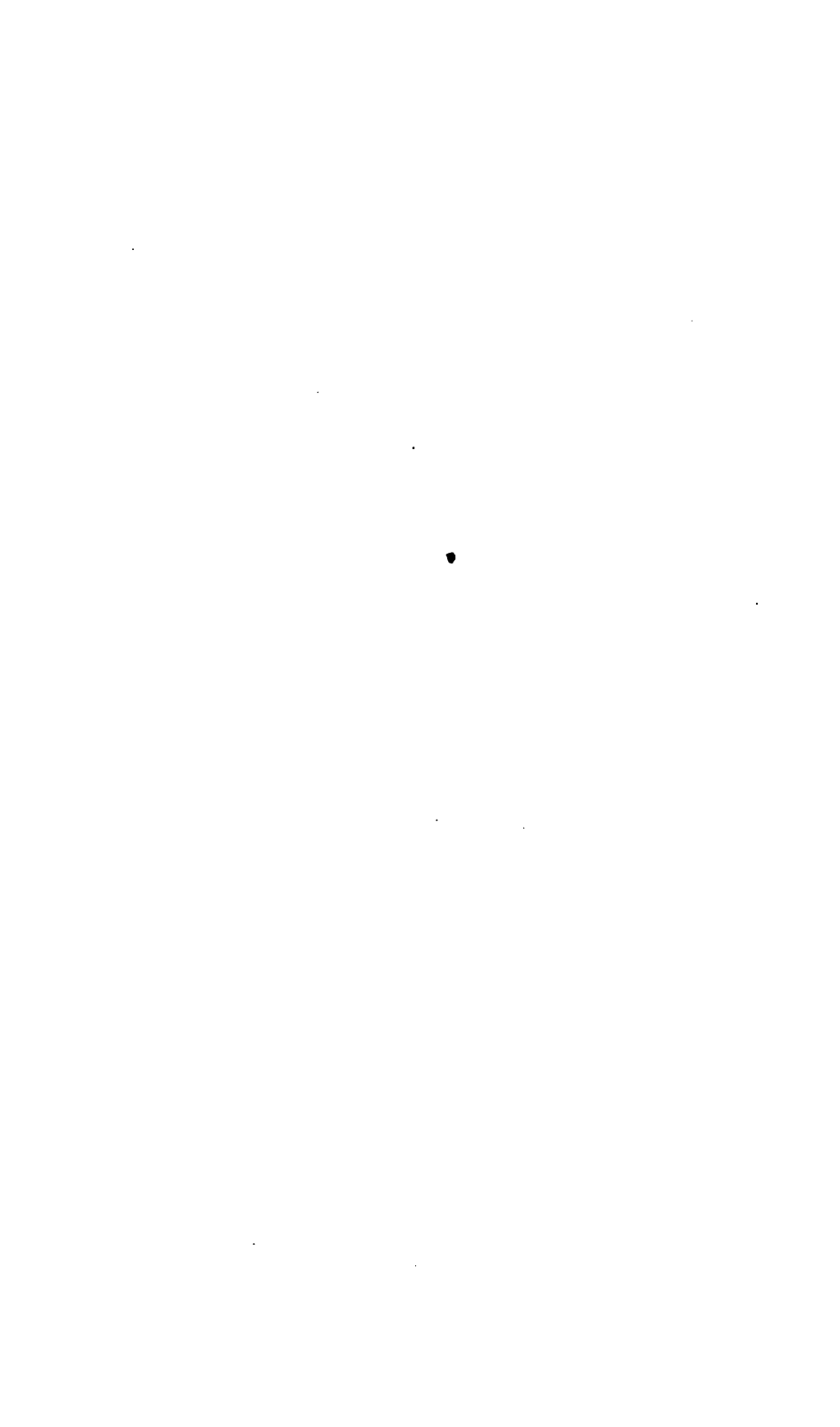
We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

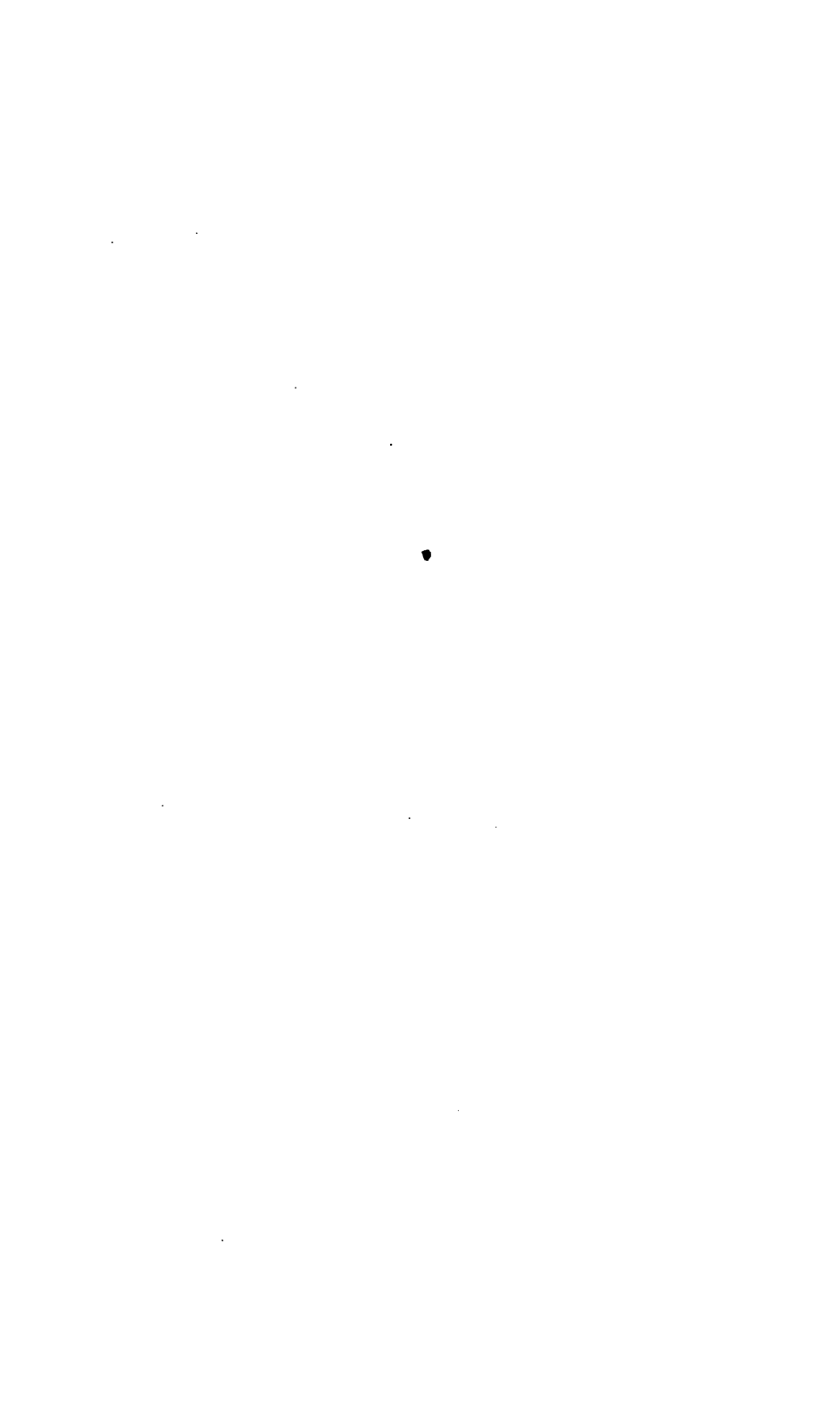
About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>





THE FOUR GOSPELS



THE FOUR GOSPELS

Ballantyne Press
BALLANTYNE, HANSON AND CO., EDINBURGH
CHANDOS STREET, LONDON

THE FOUR GOSPELS

EXPLAINED BY THEIR WRITERS

WITH AN APPENDIX

ON

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

EDITED BY

J. B. ROUSTAING

TRANSLATED BY

W. F. KIRBY

IN THREE VOLUMES

VOL. II

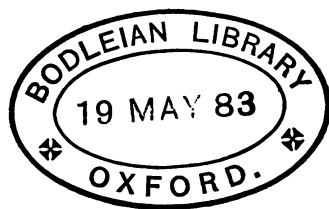
LONDON

TRÜBNER & CO., LUDGATE HILL

1881

[All rights reserved]

101. f. 732.



PART I.—(Continued.)

COMMENTARY ON THE GOSPELS OF MATTHEW, MARK AND LUKE, COMMONLY CALLED THE SYNOPTIC GOSPELS.

MATTHEW, CHAP. XII.—VERSES 1–8. MARK,
CHAP. II.—VERSES 23–28. LUKE, CHAP. VI.
VERSES 1–5.

The Sabbath made for Man.

Matthew xii. (1) At that season, Jesus went through the corn-fields on the Sabbath days, and his disciples were hungry, and began to pluck the ears, and to eat. (2) And the Pharisees beholding said to him, Behold thy disciples do what it is unlawful to do on on the Sabbath. (3) And he said to them, Have ye not read what David did, when he was hungry, and those who were with him? (4) How he entered into the house of God, and ate the shew-bread, which it was not lawful for him nor for those with him to eat, but only for the priests? (5) Or have ye not read in the Law that on the Sabbath day the priests in the Temple break the Sabbath, and are blameless? (6) And I say unto you that here is one greater than the Temple. (7) And if ye knew what this meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice, you would not have condemned the innocent. (8) For the Son of Man is also Lord of the Sabbath.

Mark ii. (23) And it came to pass, as he went through the corn-fields on the Sabbaths, that his disciples began to pluck the ears of corn by the way. (24) And the Pharisees said to him, See, why do they do what is unlawful on the Sabbaths? (25) And he said to them, Have ye never read what David did, when he had need, and was hungry, and they that were with him? (26) How he went into the house of God to Abiathar the high priest, and ate the shew-bread, which it is not lawful to eat, except for the priests, and gave also to those who were with him? (27) And he said to them, The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath. (28) For the Son of Man is Lord also of the Sabbath.

Luke vi. (1) And it came to pass that on the first Sabbath after the second day of the feast of unleavened bread,* he went through the

* So Diddell and Scott translate the words *δευτερόπρωτον σαββάτον*.—
TRANSL.

cornfields, and his disciples plucked the ears, and ate, rubbing them in their hands. (2) And certain of the Pharisees said to them, Why do ye that which is not lawful to do on the Sabbaths? (3) And Jesus answered and said to them, Have ye not read what David did, when he was hungry, and those who were with him? (4) How he went into the house of God, and took the shew-bread, and ate, and gave also to those who were with him, which it was not lawful for them to eat, but only for the priests? (5) And he said to them, The Son of Man is Lord also of the Sabbath.

§ 155. We have already explained (§ 82) the motives for the institution of the Sabbath by Moses, and the import of the saying of Jesus, "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath."

The shew-bread, which it was only lawful for the priests to eat, were loaves offered upon the altar. When Jesus reminded the Pharisees of what David had done, he taught man that nothing which God had made, and which was fit for food, was forbidden to the necessities of human existence; and that the shew-bread, like the Sabbath, was lawful to him, in case of necessity.

According to the Law, the Hebrew was to abstain from any manual labour on the Sabbath day, and was not to touch any metal. But the priests broke the Sabbath in the Temple, in performing the ceremonies of their religion, and therefore might have been regarded as guilty.

Jesus told the Pharisees that they did not understand the words, "I desire mercy and not sacrifice." The spiritual meaning is that God is always ready to show mercy to his weak and fallible children, and permits them to repent, and repair their faults. In adding, "You would not have condemned the innocent," Jesus alluded to the sentences frequently passed upon those who were accused of sacrilege on the slightest pretext, and stoned without mercy.

Jesus said, "The Son of Man is Lord also of the Sabbath," because he was the first who had dared to attack the inviolability of the Sabbath; and even in the eyes of his disciples, he was obliged to rely on the authority of his mission, lest he should shock them. He stated this, by saying, "There

is one here who is greater than the Temple ;" as being the representative of the Divine will.

§ 156. How should the Sabbath be kept during the spiritual era now opening before men by the New Revelation ?

The time is coming when men shall no longer worship in this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, but will become the true worshippers whom the Father desires to worship Him in spirit and in truth. The time is approaching, though it has not yet arrived, when men will be united in one and the same belief by this spiritual faith : God is one and alone, the universal Creator ; the Father ; Jesus is a pure and perfect spirit, the Protector and Ruler of your planet and its humanity ; your Master, the Son ; and the Spirits of the Lord, when God has appointed to watch over the progress of your planet and its humanity, working under the direction of Jesus ; the Holy Spirit.

The time is approaching, though it has not yet arrived, when men will have become the true worshippers of the Father in spirit and in truth, and will understand that the pure heart is the only true temple of God, and that Christ is present everywhere, where two or more are gathered together in his name, and pray with the heart and not with the lips for mutual instruction, being animated with faith, love, and humility, and no longer divided and separated by any of the external systems of worship which still keep them apart. The time is approaching, though it has not yet come, when men will understand that the Divine law is wholly included in the commandments, "Love one another," and "Love God above all things, and your neighbour as yourselves," by always and under all circumstances acting towards your brethren as you would wish them to act towards you. Men will then understand that this double love should influence them to practise the moral laws of worship, labour, reproduction, preservation, destruction, society, progress, equality, liberty, justice, love, and charity, as they are instructed by the law of Jesus, which the Spirits of the Lord have explained and developed in spirit and in truth.

The outward religion of the Hebrews was a purely educational and transitory system ; and since the earthly mission of Jesus, it has given rise to human institutions and interpretations, and to external religions which still separate men whom the Spiritual Religion seeks to form into one flock under one Shepherd ; Christ who is your Protector, your Ruler, and your Master.

You are passing through a transitional stage ; and until these external religions have become reformed, transformed, and united by the influence of the Spiritual Religion among men themselves, leading them to worship the Father in spirit and in truth, they should be regarded in the same light as the institution of the Sabbath.

This day of rest for the body ought to be specially devoted to the service of God ; but you have many ways of devoting it to his service. Let your thoughts rise more often and more fervently towards God, since you are less distracted by the necessities of life, and above all, let your good works be more abundant. Remember, both when you begin and when you end your week, that God beholds many poor creatures who wait for their brethren to supply their needs. Sanctify the day of rest by devoting it to good works ; follow the example of your brethren in space who are every moment engaged in some useful employment ; but let your body rest from the hard toil of the week, your mind from fatiguing philosophical or religious studies, and your heart from being preoccupied with material interests.

Begin your day by consecrating it to the Creator. Sanctify it first by the most fervent prayers for yourselves and your brethren, and render to God the public worship prescribed by your religion. Let those among you who are Spiritists, whatever may be the external religion into which you were born, offer to your God the homage prescribed by your creed, in spirit and in truth. You thus set an example to your brethren among whom you dwell, and who know your faith and opinions. This external religion is really a necessary restraint for those who are less advanced than you, and helps them to remember their Creator, by im-

pressing their senses with external rites and material images.

After this, relieve and console whomsoever you can. Go to those whom you have offended, and ask them to forget your faults; and go to those who have cruelly injured you in your interests, happiness, or pride, and bring them your pardon and your peace. Visit those who are sick and unhappy; exhort them to resignation, instruct them, and encourage them to hope. Visit those unhappy ones who want the necessities of life, and relieve them according to your means. Impose on yourselves some slight privation every day in the week for their sakes, according to your abilities and position. Take this offering to those who are in want; and if you are unable to do this, if you are so poor yourselves that you are really unable to make any sacrifice whatever, endeavour at least to console those who are suffering from any misfortune.

Go then, children, and sanctify the Lord's day by good works, and sincere and holy resolutions. When your day is ended, and you thank God for the little good which he has permitted you to accomplish, ask that he may permit you to do more in future. Search your hearts, to discover if you have done your work as well as you were able. Go, then, and if you act thus the blessings of the Lord will descend upon you. Rest your bodies from exhausting labour, but never let your hearts rest from any good which you can accomplish.

MATTHEW, CHAP. XII.—VERSES 9-14. MARK,

CHAP. III.—VERSES 1-6. LUKE, CHAP. VI.

VERSES 6-11.

Cure of the man with the palsied hand, on the Sabbath.

Matth. xii. (9) And departing thence, he came into their synagogue. (10) And behold, there was a man who had a withered hand, and they asked him, saying, Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath days? that they might denounce him. (11) And he said to them, What man among you, who has a sheep, would not seize hold of it and pull it out, if it should fall into a ditch on the Sabbath days? (12) How much better,

therefore, is a man than a sheep ! Therefore it is lawful to do well on the Sabbath days. (13) Then he saith to the man, Stretch out thy hand. And he stretched it out, and it was restored healthy like the other. (14) And the Pharisees went out, and took counsel against him how they might destroy him.

Mark iii. (1) And he entered the synagogue again, and there was a man there whose hand was diseased. (2) And they were watching if he would heal him on the Sabbath days, that they might accuse him. (3) And he saith to the man whose hand was diseased, Rise up in the midst. (4) And he saith unto them, Is it lawful to do good on the Sabbath days, or to do evil ; to save life, or to destroy it ? And they were silent. (5) And looking round upon them with anger, being grieved at the hardness of their hearts, he saith to the man, Stretch out thy hand. And he stretched it out, and his hand was restored healthy like the other. (6) And the Pharisees went out immediately, and took counsel with the Herodians how they might destroy him.

Luke vi. (6) And it came to pass on another Sabbath that he went into the synagogue and taught, and there was a man there whose right hand was withered. (7) And the Scribes and Pharisees watched him if he would heal on the Sabbath day, that they might find an accusation against him. (8) And he knew their plots, and said to the man whose hand was withered, Rise up, and stand in the midst. (9) And he rose up, and stood. Then Jesus said to them, Consider ye, what is fitting, to do good or to do evil on the Sabbath days ; to save life, or to destroy it ? (10) And looking round upon them all, he said to the man, Stretch out thy hand. And he did so, and his hand was restored healthy like the other. (11) And they were filled with rage, and debated with each other what they should do to Jesus.

§ 157. We need not repeat the explanations which we have already given respecting the Sabbath, and the use which man should make of it.

The sick man who was healed by Jesus in the synagogue suffered from paralysis of the right hand. This is the correct meaning of the *withered* hand, as some translations express it.

We have explained twice already (§ § 110 and 121) how Jesus cured paralysis. He healed the paralysed hand, and rendered it as healthy as the other, by the magnetic action of his will and his gaze, and directed strengthening fluids upon the diseased hand, and the organism of the patient. Have you not seen magnetic effects produced by a look ?

You are told in the narrative of Mark (v. 5) that Jesus looked upon the Scribes and Pharisees with anger, being grieved at the hardness of their hearts. These are human expressions, and when you read the Gospel narratives you must never confound expressions which reproduce the im-

pressions, ideas, and opinions of the men surrounding Jesus, and to whom he spoke, with the actual words, personality, and actions of the Master himself.

The heart of Jesus was never inflamed with anger. The original word signifies either anger or indignation; and it must here be understood to mean indignation. The Hebrews, like yourselves, constantly spoke of the wrath of God as weighing upon the guilty. But how could God and Christ partake in the feeling of anger which they denounced in men? The men around Jesus thought that he was indignant at seeing the Scribes and Pharisees resist his efforts to reform them. In reality, he suffered when he saw the guilty spirits whom he desired to enlighten, close their eyes against the light lest they might perceive it. Are not your guardian angels grieved at the hardness of your hearts; and were not the Scribes and Pharisees gifted with free will? Do not wonder at the painful impression which Jesus experienced, notwithstanding his knowledge of the future. Consider well the nature of the fore-knowledge of God, and that which Jesus possesses as the direct representative of the divine will, having regard to the free will of man. We have already explained to you that God sees and knows the state of the spirit, and follows the phases of progress, and the successive stages of existence which the spirit must pass through, in which he is required to exert his free will, either for good or evil, by the action of his own will, or under the secret influence of the good or evil spirits whom he attracts or repulses according to the good or evil tendency of his feelings, desires, and tendencies. Man is subject to this influence at every moment, and this constitutes the temptation which he is free to yield to, or to resist. He is always free to listen to good inspirations, or to close his ears against them; to follow them or not to follow them; or to accept or reject evil inspirations. Consequently, it is under these surrounding influences that the spirit, in the fulness of his free will, must advance or stand still in the path of progress. It is thus that the Scribes and

Pharisees were required to accept or reject the teachings of Jesus.

The Scribes and Pharisees who stood around Jesus in the synagogue were hardened incarnate spirits. It was therefore improbable that they would accept the light, but they had yet the opportunity afforded them of escaping from painful expiations; for the Lord never shows any partiality. Spirits are generally incarnated by their own free choice, as regards both the kind and scene of their experiences. They generally select scenes which are congenial to them; and pride reigned supreme among the men of authority among the Jews at the time of Jesus; the Scribes, Pharisees, and chief priests. Pride closed their eyes and ears; but the goodness of God opened to them, as to all others, this new path of purification. Their guardian angels worked for their advancement as they do for all; but they repulsed them by an effort of their independent will; and in the fulness of their free choice, they accepted the evil influences and inspirations of evil spirits. But even if the new path which was thus opened to them was sterile in that existence, it would nevertheless yield fruits of purification after death, with the aid of subsequent existences.

MATTHEW, CHAP. XII.—VERSES 15-21.

Mission of the Messiah.

(15) And when Jesus knew it, he withdrew himself from thence, and large crowds followed him, and he healed them all, (16) And cautioned them not to make him known, (17) That the word might be fulfilled which was spoken through Isaiah the prophet, saying, (18) Behold my son, whom I have chosen; my beloved, in whom my soul is well pleased. I will put my spirit upon him, and he shall announce judgment to the nations. (19) He shall not strive nor shout, nor shall any one hear his voice in the streets. (20) A bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench, until he shall have brought judgment to victory. (21) And the nations shall trust in his name.

§ 158. The words of the prophet Isaiah apply to Jesus, and are easily understood by freeing the spirit from the letter. You must remember what had just taken place, and how the Pharisees had been plotting together to destroy Jesus, and consulting what they should do against him;

and the caution which Jesus himself gave to those who followed him, and whom he healed.

Jesus is the servant of God, and his beloved, because he is a pure and perfect spirit. God chose him by appointing him to be the protector and ruler of your planet. His soul delighteth in him, by communicating to him his power, justice, and compassion, and thus exalting your Master by entrusting him with the formation of your planet, and with the direction and guidance both of the planet itself, and of everything which moves or exists upon it, as well as of humanity, in the paths of physical, moral, and intellectual progress, that he may lead you to the purity and perfection to which you ought to attain. God constantly puts his spirit upon him by the direct Divine inspiration which he communicates to him.

Jesus has manifested justice to the nations by his earthly mission, by showing them the straight and sure course of conduct by which alone they can reach the goal. He still manifests justice to the nations to-day, when the new and regenerative era of Spiritism has commenced, by the spirits of the Lord, who come in his name to explain and to develop in spirit and in truth the good news which he himself preached to men. But this time he illumines the path of progress in the name of the Spirit of Truth ; and all men can follow it with unhesitating steps, guided by the spiritual light from the torch of truth, through knowledge, charity, and love, which are about to reconcile faith and reason.

(Matth. xii. 19.)—These words alluded to the customs of the Hebrews, who assembled in the streets to deliberate over important matters, when every one sought to enforce his own opinion by trying to shout down his opponents. But Jesus did not strive nor shout, nor was his voice thus heard in the streets. You are told that he spoke to men as one having authority, and not as the scribes.

(Matth. xii. 20.)—These words allude to guilty spirits in whom there is any tendency, however slight, to improvement. Jesus never did and never will break the bruised reed, or quench the smouldering flax, because every spirit must reach the goal, and Jesus never rejects any guilty

spirit until justice shall be done ; that is, until the spirit has freed itself by expiation from the vices which made it unjust and impure. Even as you call Jesus the Just One on account of his purity, thus injustice in this passage is equivalent to impurity. He shall not break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax, until he shall have assured the victory to justice ; or until the spirits incarnated upon your earth shall have become purified, either on your planet, at the time of its renovation, or by means of long ages of expiation on the lower worlds to which the spirits who have remained guilty and rebellious until this period have been banished. But at length even these spirits will clearly perceive their wilful perversity and blindness, and their dread of expiation, and their repentance and remorse will cause them to incline, however feebly, towards something better.

“And in his name shall the nations trust.” All will understand that his morality alone can make men progress ; and all will trust in his influence to reach perfection. The present revelation opens and unfolds this new phase.

The words of the prophet Isaiah must be fulfilled respecting the Pharisees who took council together against Jesus. They were then the bruised reed which he would not break, and were afterwards to become the smouldering flax which he would not quench. They were, like all others, required to free themselves by expiation from the vices which made them unjust, and to purify themselves. In order that these words might be fulfilled sooner, Jesus commanded the sick persons who followed him, and whom he healed, not to make Him known, lest these guilty spirits might be led to plunge themselves deeper in their evil courses, and thus be exposed to still severer expiations.

MATTHEW, CHAP. XII.—VERSES 22-28. MARK,
CHAP. III.—VERSES 20-26.

Blasphemy of the Pharisees.

Matth. xii. (22) Then they brought a demoniac to him who was blind and dumb, and he healed him, so that the blind and dumb both spake

and saw. (23) And all the crowds were astonished, and said, Is not this the son of David? (24) But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, This man does not cast out devils except by Beelzeboul, the ruler of the devils. (25) But Jesus knowing their thoughts, said to them, Every kingdom which is divided against itself is made desolate, and every house divided against itself shall not stand. (26) And if Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself; how then shall his kingdom stand? (27) And if I cast out demons by Beelzeboul, by whom do your sons cast them out? by this shall they be your judges. (28) But if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come unto you.

Mark iii. (20) And they came into the house, and a crowd collected again, so that they were not able to eat bread, (21) And when those near him heard it, they came out to seize on him, for they said, He is out of his mind. (22) And the Scribes came down from Jerusalem, and said, He hath Beelzeboul, and casteth out demons by the ruler of the demons. (23) But having summoned them, he said to them in parables, How can Satan cast out Satan? (24) And if a kingdom be divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. (25) And if a house be divided against itself, that house cannot stand. (26) And if Satan rises up and is divided against himself, he cannot stand, but hath an end.

§ 159. This man was subjugated by an evil spirit, who rendered him blind and dumb. The obsessing spirit shed the fluids which surrounded him over his victim's organs of sight and hearing, and the fluidic action caused by the combination of their perisprits paralysed these organs, and deprived the patient of their use for a time. Jesus healed him by the action of his powerful will, which drove away the obsessing spirit. At the same moment, he restored the patient's organs of sight and hearing to their normal condition by the magnetic action of the fluids which he directed upon him. This subjugation of the patient was an expiation for his having previously greatly abused the faculty of speech, and for his not having profited by the light which had been given him.

When the multitude beheld an event which they could neither explain nor comprehend, they were seized with wonder and admiration, and exclaimed, "Is not this the son of David?" It had been foretold that the greatest of the prophets should be of the lineage of David, and the son of David was regarded by Hebrew interpretations as a material liberator.

The words which Jesus addressed to the Scribes and Pharisees, as well as those spoken of him by his relations,

or those who were regarded as such by men, referred as much to the future as to the present. Consequently they apply to Spiritism as well as to the Gospel. They were recorded as a lesson for the present time, as regards the apostles and disciples of Jesus, and for the future, as regards the advent of the present era of Spiritism, then future, by the New Revelation. The ages are all linked together, and the further you advance, the better will you understand the close connection which exists between the appearance of Jesus on earth and the present spirit-manifestations. By revealing the origin of Jesus, we have already taught you that his appearance on earth was in reality a spirit-manifestation. As the protector and ruler of your planet and its humanity, he came to pave the way, and lay the foundations for your regeneration. The present manifestation is likewise caused by spirits who are sent among you to continue and to develop the Master's work.

In order that Jesus might be either understood or listened to, he adapted his language to the intelligence of those to whom he spoke. Consequently, like themselves, he used such terms as Beelzeboul, Satan, the ruler of the demons, the demon, the devil ; but when rightly understood, these terms must be taken figuratively, to designate the evil spirits who, having originally fallen into evil courses, continue to work evil towards men.

When the Pharisees accused Jesus of accomplishing his mighty works by the aid of the Spirit of Darkness, he pointed out to them that their own sons, the Hebrews, were likewise gifted with the same power, though to a very inferior extent. There were some chosen men sent among the Hebrews on a mission, as there always are among all nations, to guide them in the right path, even when things are at their worst.

Thus there were men of sincere piety among the Hebrews, who obeyed the law of Moses from their hearts, intending thus to serve God ; and such men sometimes succeeded in driving away the malevolent spirits who caused obsessions and subjugations, by prayer and perseverance.

We have already explained (§ 121) that those children of

men who purify themselves and raise themselves above their fathers, are their natural judges.

Spiritists, the Scribes and Pharisees of your own days, accuse you now, as those of the time of Jesus accused him, of acting under demoniacal influences. But we repeat the words of Jesus, that a kingdom divided against itself cannot stand. Know, children of men, that you can relieve your suffering brethren by your faith, your prayers, and your wisdom, and repel the spirits of darkness who seek to dwell among you. Therefore seek more and more to acquire that elevation of thought, that freedom from the things of the flesh, and that self-denial which shall make the prison of flesh which you inhabit, simply a flexible garment. You will then enjoy increasing power to cast out the evil spirits, and will also purify yourselves more and more, and the men around you will prepare enlightened guides for succeeding generations who will lead them easily to the end of their journey. Take courage ; prepare and purify yourselves, and never forget that a kingdom divided against itself cannot stand. Let all unite, and march boldly under the flag that we have unfurled for you ; follow it always, and we will guide your path.

(Matth. xii. 28.) When we free the spirit from the letter, the expression, "the Spirit of God," as applied to Jesus, signifies the direct influence which the Lord exerts upon him ; and as applied to men, you will understand, as Spiritists, that it relates to the purified spirits sent to you by the Lord, as intermediaries between his will and yourselves.

We have explained to you that God, the omnipotent Ruler, is One, Alone, and Indivisible. This is the great secret which we concealed, that it might not be fully revealed until the hour had come. God is eternal and infinite, and rules in illimitable space over all the universes. He is the incessant and eternal Creator ; he is the Father of each and all, and of whatever exists in space. The law of progress is the immutable law which he has established for all worlds, but the constitution of each world is appro-

priate to itself. It is not necessary for everything to pass through precisely the same phases, for there are spirits who have never fallen, just as there are worlds which have remained in fluidic conditions, or which are more or less material, according to the requirements of the spirits who are fitted to inhabit them. When we come to explain the spiritual meaning of the words, "In my Father's house are many mansions," we will give you fuller and more complete explanations, which would be out of place here, as they would lead us beyond the limits to which we must confine ourselves at present.

We have already told you that every world or planet is under the charge of a perfectly pure spirit, who has watched over its formation, and is then entrusted with its guidance and progress. This spirit is not only morally perfect, but is also perfect in knowledge, relatively to his mission, and to the work which has been entrusted to him. This presiding spirit of the planet is in direct communion with God. He approaches the Universal Fire, and it is through him that the wishes of the Omnipotent Lord are transmitted directly, first to the great spirits, and then from one to another through the intermediate grades of the spiritual scale, till they are communicated to yourselves by your guardian angels, and other good spirits. This communication is effected with the quickness of thought ; and it is thus that the Spirit of God works, and comes among you.

Jesus is one of those spirits who approach the Universal Fire. He is entrusted with the guidance of your world ; he is pure among the purest of those who labour at the progress of your planet and its humanity, under his direction. He is of perfect and immaculate purity, and as he has never fallen, his essence has always remained pure. It is he, the servant of God, and our Master and yours, who presides over your planet, and guides and guards it with the eye of a father. He is in direct communion with the Lord, like those of his brethren who are equal to him in purity, and each of whom is entrusted with a similar mission. He receives his commands direct without intermediaries ; and

in this sense it may be said that the Father alone knows the Son, and the Son alone knows the Father.

Bow before your devoted Saviour with reverence, gratitude and love. Even since your globe arose from the fluids which are diffused through space, and his divine will, as the messenger of God, combined these substances to form a world, according to the immutable law of progress, he has always watched over you anxiously through the various phases which your spirit has passed through from its origin to the present time, and his powerful sympathy has always extended the protection of the Omnipotent over your planet and its humanity.

Love Jesus with all the energy of your souls, for it is he who took upon himself an apparently human body to lay the foundations of the work of regeneration. Love him with all your strength, for he accepted incarnation, though he needed not to suffer any incarnation as an expiation, not even in these exalted worlds where spirits who have remained pure till they have reached a very high elevation, and have then failed, how slightly soever, exile themselves to redeem their faults. Nothing can stand before the Lord but spotless perfection, and even so slight a failing that your faculties would be incapable of noticing it would immediately become an offence which the progressing spirit would perceive at once, and would expiate by a more or less material or more or less fluidic incarnation, according to his degree of elevation, and the extent and gravity of the fault. Every penalty is proportioned to the fault, and there are some faults in the eyes of the Omnipotent Lord which are so subtle that they would escape you, but they do not escape the spirit who is sufficiently elevated to perceive his fault even before it has germinated, so to speak; and he voluntarily exiles himself to expiate his fault by depriving himself for a time of the infinite joys of a free and pure spirit. Love Jesus with all the strength of your souls, for he is coming now to continue his work of regeneration, and to lead you by the New Revelation and by the Spirit of Truth, in the continuous path of moral and intellectual progress,

and to lead you step by step to the one eternal God, the King of heaven and earth, to whom you owe the homage and tribute of your adorations, for he alone is entitled to them, and to him alone you should offer them.

The kingdom of God has come to him who has discovered the path which leads most directly and speedily to the goal.

The kingdom of God had come to the hardened Jews, who had distorted the law of Moses as much, and more, than Catholicism has distorted the law of Christ. This kingdom came to those who had prepared a long and painful expiation for themselves, to open before them a door of hope, and the means of arriving at well-being by the shortest path.

The kingdom of God has also come to you, who instead of simply following the law of Jesus (which would have been sufficient for you) have allowed yourselves to be led astray by pride and selfishness, and have perverted this pure law in such a manner as to bend it to your impurities. Some have made it an elastic garment to bend to all the caprices of their greatest irregularities (we speak here of those who make religion only a means, by practising it outwardly, and trying to bend it to their needs), whereas it is a Gehenna to others, constraining their movements in a painful manner (we speak here of those who seriously accept religion, but who are wanting in intelligence, and strain themselves to support the whole weight of the yoke which is imposed on them, however heavy they may find it).

The kingdom of God has also come to you, for after we, the apostles and disciples of Jesus, had laboured in the path which he opened up and marked out, we now clear it of the thorns and thistles which have choked it, by the New Revelation, and with the aid of our brethren, the other spirits of the Lord. We are removing the sharp stones one by one, and hold out our hands to encourage you to advance, removing the bandage from the eyes of those whose sight is still weak, and letting the light shine upon the eyes of those who are able to bear it. The kingdom of God is drawing nearer and nearer, and we will show you more and

more of its glory; but you must wait till your sight is sufficiently strong to sustain its rays.

The accusation which the Scribes and Pharisees brought against Jesus of being the agent of Beelzeboul is repeated several times in different places, and under different circumstances. What Mark reports did not take place at the time or under the circumstances related by Matthew, but immediately after Jesus had selected the twelve Apostles, and had given them power to heal the sick, and to drive away the evil spirits or demons.

(Mark iii. 21.)—You know that during his earthly mission Jesus appeared to men to be a man like themselves, and the member of a human family. The revelation made to Joseph and Mary was kept secret till after the accomplishment of his mission, when its promulgation led men to regard the Master as a portion of God himself, since it contained the veiled announcement of the spiritual origin of Jesus, which was designed to be expounded by the New Revelation. As the Hebrews always married in their own tribe, they were nearly always relations, or regarded themselves as such; and consequently Jesus appeared to men to be surrounded by those who were more or less distantly related to him. The relations of Jesus thought that he had lost his wits, when they saw him choose his Apostles and confer such powers upon them; for the conditions of their humanity did not allow them to suppose that he could rise to such an elevation. Consequently they came to seize upon him, saying that he had been taken with madness.

Jesus was the personification of the doctrine which is springing up afresh among you, and, like every great and generous thought, it has been but little understood. Thus, even among the members of his own family (humanly speaking) he met with great opposition, for they were not aware of his extra-human origin. Did he not say himself that no one is a prophet in his own country? And in your own days, do you not meet with divisions in families, and stones cast at any member who wanders from the beaten track?

Man hates everything which he is unable to comprehend, and he condemns everything which troubles or alarms him.

You, Spiritists, who accept the New Revelation, and thus quit the beaten track, are accused by your relations and others (as was Jesus in his day) of having lost your wits, or being attacked with madness. At the same time, the Scribes and Pharisees of your age accuse you of acting under diabolical influence. New disciples of Christ, who preach the doctrine of the Master, which is renewed among you to be explained and developed in spirit and in truth, by the New Revelation, unite the influence of your example to that of your precepts, and reply to these accusations by patience, mildness, indulgence, firmness, and courage. Christ watches over and protects you, and causes the spirits of the Lord to guide you in your course.

MATTHEW, CHAP. XII.—VERSES 29–37. MARK,

CHAP. III.—VERSES 27–30. LUKE, CHAP. XI.

VERSES 21–23 ; XII. 10.

*The Strong Man Armed—Blasphemy against the Holy Spirit
—The Tree known by its Fruit.*

Matth. xii. (29) How can any one come into the house of a strong man, and plunder his goods, unless he shall first bind the strong man, and shall then plunder his house? (30) He who is not with me is against me, and he who does not gather with me disperseth. (31) Therefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be remitted unto men, but the blasphemy of the Spirit shall not be remitted unto men, (32) And if any one shall speak a word against the Son of Man, it shall be remitted unto him, but if any one shall speak against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be remitted unto him, neither in this age, nor in that which is to come. (33) Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or make the tree corrupt, and its fruit corrupt, for the tree is known by its fruit. (34) Offspring of vipers, how can ye speak good things, being evil? for out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaketh. (35) The good man brings forth good things from the good treasure of his heart, and the wicked man brings forth evil things from the evil treasure. (36) And I say unto you that for every idle word which men shall speak, they shall give an account of it in the day of judgment. (37) For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.

Mark iii. (27) No man can enter the house of the strong man, and plunder his goods, unless he shall first bind the strong man, and then he will plunder his house. (28) For I say unto you that all manner of sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, and the blasphemies which they have blasphemed. (29) But if any one shall blaspheme against

the Holy Spirit, he hath no forgiveness in the age, but is liable to age-long judgment. (30) Because they said, He hath an unpurified spirit.

Luke xi. (21) When the strong man is armed, and guards his court-yard, his possessions are in quiet. (22) But when one who is stronger than he shall come upon him and overcome him, he takes from him his armour in which he trusted, and they will distribute his spoils. (23) He who is not with me is against me, and he who gathereth not with me scattereth.

Luke xii. (10) And if any one shall speak a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him; but to him who shall blaspheme against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven.

§ 160. We have often told you that Jesus spoke to the men of that age in terms which were necessary for them, teaching what was needful for the present, without prejudice to the future, for which, however, he prepared the way. He used material images, which men could understand, and which appealed strongly to their imaginations; and all such images were intended to convey some lesson or warning. He said, "The spirit quickeneth, and the words which I speak unto you are spirit and life." It is for you who have been called upon to receive the New Revelation, to perceive the true sense and import of these words. You should therefore always seek to free the spirit from the letter, that you may be able to discover the thought of the Master, and the true meaning of his words.

What Jesus says (Matth. xii. 29; Mark iii. 27) about the strong man, is an emblem. It is sin which binds him, and surrounds him with snares to destroy him; and as soon as it has overcome him, it strips him of all his virtues.

(Luke xi. 21, 22.)—As long as man is strong in himself, watching over his conscience, and always on the alert to strive against his evil instincts, he is sure of overcoming them, but if he forgets himself, gives way to sloth, and lets his conscience sleep, he is assailed by vices which snare him in their baneful toils, and become his masters. They tear his weapons from him one by one, and gradually deprive him of his good resolutions, and his virtues, and beat him down by turning them against himself, for lost virtues become converted unto vices. He who does not yield to evil, must practise the good which is opposed to it; but the contrary is also true, and he who is negligent in

well-doing, falls inevitably into the evil which is opposed to it. Is not a man who is deficient in charity proud and selfish? Does not the man who forgets his God become impious? It is the same with all the virtues which you do not practise, and which are consequently replaced by the corresponding vices which they ought to have destroyed in you.

The words of Jesus, "And he will take his spoils" (Luke xi. 22), are not an emblem as regards the intelligence of those to whom they were spoken. They follow naturally from the material figure which Jesus set before the Hebrews. Every man who forces his way into the house of another as a burglar, and disarms and bind him, does so with a material object in view. Thus Jesus added, "And he will take his spoils," because the Jews would not have been able to understand the motive by which the burglar was actuated, unless he had turned his victory to his own advantage. In any case, the vices which replace virtues in the heart of him who allows his watch upon himself to slumber, do not profit by the virtues that they have destroyed, but they profit by their destruction when they drive them from the heart, in the sense that they have made their way where they ought not to have penetrated, and have established themselves where they should not have been allowed to enter, and then steal the virtues from the asylum which has been opened to them.

(Matth. xii. 30; Luke xi. 23.)—"He who is not with me is against me," said Jesus. He who does not follow the law of Christ (that is, the moral doctrine of which he is the personification) wanders from it. He is then against him, and wanders from his ways.

"And he who gathereth not with me, scattereth." He who does not walk in the way opened by Jesus, does not gather the treasures which the Lord reserves for the just. He wanders from the path, squanders these treasures, and loses precious time.

(Matth. xii. 31, 32; Mark iii. 28, 29; Luke xii. 10.)—Do not be surprised at the slight variations which you find in each narrative. The words of Jesus which the three

Evangelists recorded were pronounced in different places, and at different times, and are only brought together here to avoid repeating nearly the same words, and to develop the thought of the Master by placing them in juxtaposition. You can easily understand that Jesus often repeated the same words to the Hebrews who were gathered round him ; but his ideas were not always expressed in exactly the same terms. Jesus always appropriated the lesson to the intelligence and the needs of those whom he taught ; and hence arose those slight differences which you notice in the records. Each Evangelist recorded nearly similar events happening near together, but the accompanying incidents did not all correspond. Each recorded in his own way, and under medianimic inspiration, what he had seen or heard, or what he had been told.

(Matth. xii. 31, 32 ; Mark iii. 28, 29 ; Luke xii. 10.)—In these words, Jesus first sets forth the difference between the Omnipotent Lord and himself, notwithstanding his exalted nature, and his spiritual origin and position. Blasphemy consists in denying God, and in accusing him who is all love, knowledge and justice, and the Absolute Truth, of injustice or error ; and what crime can be worse than this ? Is not blasphemy against God the greatest possible offence ? When the children of a family revolt against the authority of their elder brother, even supposing that he is acting as the representative of the father, their fault will always be less than if they insult and revile the father himself. You may carry the comparison further if you remember that Jesus personifies the morality which he taught still more by his actions than by his words.

The threat of eternal punishment attributed to Jesus has no existence. The words used by the Hebrews which have been thus translated have a double meaning. When applied to God, they have an absolute meaning, and imply eternity in the strict sense ; but when applied to men, these expressions were used in a relative sense, to designate periods of immense and indefinite extent, but which must nevertheless terminate. When Jesus said that he who blasphemed

against the Holy Spirit should not be forgiven, he used expressions which were intended to be fully explained at the time of the New Revelation. In the meantime, he allowed men to interpret them for themselves, and they have interpreted them falsely, by attaching the idea of eternal punishment to them, understanding Jesus to have used expressions in an absolute sense which he himself used only relatively. They did not understand that the words of Jesus implied a relative eternity ; more than one age, and the age that is to come. He spoke thus to give them some idea of the vast duration of the punishment of him who denies God, or who accuses Him who is all love, knowledge, and justice, and the Absolute Truth, of falsehood or error. But everything has its object, and these false interpretations were due to the state of intelligence and to the needs of successive ages. They formed part of the means and conditions of progress ; they were useful at the time, and prepared the way for the future of the New Revelation which now opens before you.

Jesus spoke to men whose imaginations needed to be strongly impressed. You see this still, for we do not speak the same language to you all. We often accommodate ourselves to your weaknesses and even to your prejudices that we may gradually lead you on to truths which might have repelled you at first. We never fight against human opinions unnecessarily, as long as they are consistent with the progress of humanity. When a feeble spirit clings firmly to such and such a doctrine, or to such and such a ceremony, we do not say to him, "The religion which is pleasing to the Lord must spring from the heart alone, and outward observances are worthless in his eyes." On the contrary, we say to the feeble man who requires some support to sustain his faith, or as a barrier to prevent his passing certain limits, "Serve the Lord conscientiously ; and fulfil your external observances with zeal, but do not let them lead you to neglect that worship of the soul which is pleasing to the Lord. You are weak and need support ; seek it therefore where you have been accustomed to find it, but unite it with

that of your friends, the spirits of the Lord, who aid and surround you, and who see only one object for you to attain; happiness in the future life, and peace in your present existence."

We thus sympathize with human prejudices and weaknesses; but do not misunderstand us. We never sympathize with the faults and errors of men; but speak severely to some and gently to others, suiting our language to the character and disposition of each. Consequently Jesus, the Supremely Wise, knew better than we how to make his lesson comprehensible in an opportune and useful manner to the hardened spirits to whom he spoke; and he never really threatened man with eternal punishment.

Jesus appropriated his words to the intelligence of his hearers; but the fault involves a punishment which you may regard as eternal, in proportion to your measures of time; for the rebellious spirit who blasphemes against his God must suffer long trials to bring him back to his duty. Such an insane heart implies a degree of pride and rebellion in the spirit which must lead him into many falls. Do you not admit that different degrees of delinquency imply a greater or less degree of perversity, and that he who has committed only one fault, and that comparatively slight, is more ready to repent and is less profoundly vicious than a man who has sinned often and deeply, it being understood that the amount of guilt is in proportion to the intention, and not to the absence of opportunity?

There is no such thing as absence of pardon in a material sense, but it is relative, and refers to the terror of the guilty spirit at his punishment and its duration. This, though nothing in eternity, nevertheless appears to be eternity itself to him who cannot see beyond the narrow limits of his intelligence. Have you not heard guilty spirits groaning under the weight of "eternal sufferings," and do you not know that this very belief is one of the means of bringing them to repentance? Do you not know why? It is thus: The severity and duration of the punishment wear out the evil energies of the guilty one.

Wearied with suffering, and terrified at the prospect of "eternal sufferings," he is thrown back upon himself. He looks back upon the past with despair, reckons up all the faults and crimes which have driven him into the abyss, and exclaims at last, "If it were only to be done over again!" Then the spirits around him begin to make their influence felt, and lead him to reflect how he would act if it were to be done over again; and little by little he is led to repent, and repentance gradually restores the hope of pardon. Under the influence of this hope his repentance becomes developed, and he suffers his expiation with patience and resignation. At length, after sincere and profound repentance, comes the desire to repair and expiate the past, and to progress by the aid of new efforts; and God pardons him, and grants the guilty spirit, who has now become repentant and submissive, the favour of reincarnation, that he may return to the path of reparation and progress.

When Jesus or the Evangelists speak of the Holy Spirit, the expression signifies the good spirits who are the messengers and ministers of the Lord to men, according to their degree of elevation. If Jesus here speaks of blasphemy against the Holy Spirit to denote blasphemy against God, it is because the Jews used the term to denote the intelligence of God himself. But it comes to the same thing, for exalted spirits are only the reflection of the Omnipotent Lord.

When a man blasphemes against God, he rebels against the inspirations of his guardian angel and of other good spirits, and is never pardoned, so long as he remains guilty and rebellious. Eternal punishment would imply eternal guilt, and if the spirit remained eternally guilty and rebellious, he would be guilty of an eternal sin, and would never be pardoned either in this or in any future age; but it is not and cannot be thus. Such an idea would be contrary to the omnipotence, justice, goodness, and infinite mercy of God, as well as to the promise made by Jesus in the name of the God of Love, in the parable of the Prodigal Son, as well as in the following words, "My Father does not desire that one of his little ones should perish. I am come to

save that which was lost. Be ye perfect, as your Father in the heavens is perfect." Thus there is no guilty or rebellious spirit who does not submit, in the eternity before him, to the immutable law of progress, perfectibility, suffering, and expiation, nor any such spirit who will not be overcome with remorse and repentance, in the exercise of his free-will, and under the action of his conscience. Every such spirit will be brought back to the fold like a wandering sheep, by the aid of moral sufferings in the errant state, appropriate to his faults, and afterwards by trials and expiations, with time and reincarnation. He will thus be led back to his Father's house like the Prodigal Son, repentant and submissive, and will become purified, and will one day be received by the Great Father, the God of love and of infinite mercy.

(Matth. xii. 33.)—By these words, Jesus taught his disciples to judge of men. Assuredly, if a man's instincts are evil, he will be guilty of evil actions, but if on the other hand you see him attempting to act rightly, and endeavouring to fulfil the duties which are imposed on him by humanity, you may say, "The tree is good," and you may then be sure that, once cultivated, it will become better.

(Matth. xii. 34, 35.)—By the term "offspring of vipers," an expression suited to the time and the men, Jesus designated that race of proud and inferior spirits who believed that they could succeed without aid, and did not wish to receive any light. Every word flows from the heart when it openly expresses the mode of thought. If it is veiled or smoothly expressed when aggressive, it is a lie, an hypocrisy, or a crime. Thus Jesus said to the Pharisees, "How can ye speak good words when you yourselves are evil?" The words proceed from the treasure of the heart; if the treasure is bad, the words and actions are bad, whether they are the open expression of the thought, or whether they serve to disguise lying, hypocrisy, or malice.

(Matth. xii. 36, 37.)—"Every idle word," in this passage, should be interpreted "every impious word." If translators have rendered the passage "every idle word," it was due to an extension given to the text to make it apply to all men,

and not to blasphemers only. This deviation from the text has resulted in bridling careless language. By speaking of "*idle words*," it condemned all language which exceeded what was just and necessary, and discouraged those frivolous conversations which might turn the mind away from the high end set before it. It was necessary to speak strongly to attain this end, and the word was changed to give it a wider extension. The day of judgment when men shall render their account is that when the guilty spirit is thrown back upon himself after death, and beholds the crimes or faults of his past life, and, under the influence of remorse and repentance, suffers the expiation which is always and inevitably followed by reincarnation.

MATTHEW, CHAP. XII.—VERSES 38–42. LUKE,
CHAP. XI.—VERSES 29–32.

Sign demanded by the Pharisees.

Matth. xii. (38) Then answered him certain of the Scribes and Pharisees, saying, Teacher, we wish to see a sign from thee. (39) And he answered and said unto them, A wicked and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign, and no sign shall be given to it but the sign of the prophet Jonah, (40) For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the whale, even so shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. (41) The men of Nineveh shall rise up in the judgment with the men of this generation, and shall condemn it, for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and behold a greater than Jonah is here. (42) The Queen of the South shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it, for she came from the opposite sides of the world to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and behold a greater than Solomon is here.

Luke xi. (29) And he began to say of the assembled crowds, This is a wicked generation; it seeketh a sign, and no sign shall be given unto it but the sign of Jonah the prophet. (30) For as Jonah was a sign to the Ninevites, so shall also the Son of Man be to this generation. (31) The Queen of the South shall rise up in the judgment with the men of this generation, and shall condemn them, for she came from the opposite sides of the world to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and behold a greater than Solomon is here. (32) The men of Nineveh shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it, for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and behold a greater than Jonah is here.

§ 161. That generation which resisted every effort to lead it into the right way, was wicked and *adulterous*; for it

abandoned its faith in God to put its trust in purely external observances.

We need not now explain to you how Jesus appeared to human eyes to pass from material life to death, and his return to the spiritual life. Was not his resurrection after three days and nights of apparent death, which the vulgar took for real, a "miracle" similar to that attributed to Jonah?

We say attributed to Jonah, for the Hebrew narrative of the event was enlarged, embellished, and corrupted. The historian put a wrong interpretation on it when he said that Jonah was thrown into the sea, that God had prepared a great fish to swallow Jonah; and that he remained in the belly of the fish for three days and nights, after which God spoke to the fish, and it cast Jonah on shore out of its mouth. Jonah was not thrown into the sea, but chained for three days and nights at the bottom of the vessel in which he was sailing, and was afterwards landed in a boat steered by a friendly sailor. He was thus saved by the devotion of a man who was the instrument of Providence, for he accomplished the will of God under spirit inspiration and influence, by releasing Jonah from his chains, and taking him ashore in the ship's boat; and credulity and the tendency to the marvellous soon spread abroad the report of a miraculous event. The fish was nothing but the ship which carried Jonah, and its mouth was only the boat which brought him ashore. Jesus spoke, as he always did, in accordance with human opinions concerning Jonah and himself. The Ninevites regarded Jonah, who was a man like themselves, as an exceptionally constituted being, who had been able to live for three days and nights in the body of a fish, and had emerged from it safe and sound. Jesus appeared to the vulgar, and even to his own disciples, to be a man like themselves; and his body was apparently composed of flesh and bone like theirs. Thus his resurrection and ascension appeared to them to be just as incomprehensible and miraculous as in the case of Jonah. You who are Spiritists understand the causes, and consequently the

effects, and see that the resurrection and ascension of Jesus were the natural consequences of his mission, and of his fluidic organization. It is explained by the New Revelation which we have given you of the spiritual origin of Jesus, and of his appearance on your earth, clothed with a fluidic body or tangible perispit, having the appearance of a corporeal human body. But the men of that age saw only a body formed of corrupt matter, rising of itself, to take its place for ever where everything is spiritual. The miracle was much more obvious to men then, and we may say that it is this very impossibility of the union of matter with spirituality which has prepared for the era on which you are entering. It is this which has prevented reflecting minds from believing in miracles, for it was so inconceivable that they have sought for some possible explanation ; and many have denied because they were unable to believe, but all will accept the simple and natural explanation of the tangible perispit of the Redeemer. The veil is rent, and you now understand that when Jesus no longer desired tangibility, he resumed his ethereal essence while preserving his human appearance, and was able to emerge from the closed sepulchre, where any material human body must have remained. He could also show himself in different places, and resume his tangibility when necessary, and finally reassumed the plenitude of his spiritual faculties when he rose up before the eyes of his disciples, and returned to the ethereal sphere from which he exiled himself voluntarily to convince you, and to save you from yourselves.

(Matth. xii. 41, 42 ; Luke xi. 31, 32.)—In thus speaking, Jesus designed as usual to impress the imagination of his hearers by establishing a parallel between the Scriptures and the age in which he spoke. Respecting the Ninevites, it is clear that Jesus spoke only of those who profited by the preaching of Jonah, and returned to the ways of the Lord, and not of those who only heard, and then forgot it immediately. Respecting the Queen of the South : The Queen of Sheba came from the mountains of Libanus, which the Hebrews regarded as one of the extremities of the earth,

to visit Solomon, being attracted by his great reputation for wisdom, and, after having conversed with and listened to him, she said, "Your wisdom and works far exceed the report which I have heard; happy are those who are with you; happy are your servants who always stand in your presence, and listen to your wisdom! Blessed be the Lord your God, who has blessed you, and has set you on the throne of Israel, and who made you a king to rule with equity, and to dispense justice!"

The Ninevites who profited by the preaching of Jonah by returning to the ways of the Lord, and abiding in them, and the Queen of the South, who had likewise followed the impulse which had been given her, and had recognized the greatness of God, and the wisdom of him whom God had appointed king to rule with equity and to dispense justice, illustrated the condemnation of the Jews, who resisted all the efforts which Jesus made to lead them back to the right path.

After having alluded to the Scriptures to compare them with events which were then taking place, Jesus called the attention of mankind to the superiority of his mission, which was only to be fully laid open in your own days by the New Revelation. He also set forth the guilt of those who rebelled against his teaching and example by saying, "There is one here who is greater than Jonah, and greater than Solomon." Jonah and Solomon were missionary spirits, though of an inferior order. How was it possible that Jesus could compare himself to them, he, the Christ of God, and the representative of the Father, the Master and King of your planet and its humanity?

MATTHEW, CHAP. XII.—VERSES 43-45. LUKE,
CHAP. XI.—VERSES 24-28.

Evil Instincts and Passions.

Math. xii. (43) And when the impure spirit has gone out of a man, it goes through waterless places, to seek rest, and it does not find it. (44) Then it says, I will return to my house, from which I went out, and it comes and finds it at leisure, swept and tidied. (45) Then it

goeth, and taketh with it seven other spirits more wicked than itself, and they come in and dwell there, and the last state of that man is worse than the first. Thus shall it be with this wicked generation.

Luke xi. (24) When the unclean spirit cometh out of the man, it wanders through waterless places to seek rest, and when it does not find it, it says, I will return to my house, whence I came forth. (25) And when it comes, it finds it swept and put in order. (26) Then it goeth and taketh with it seven other spirits more wicked than itself, and they enter in and dwell there, and the last state of that man is worse than the first. (27) And it came to pass while he was saying these things, a woman raised her voice from the crowd, and said to him, "Blessed is the womb that bear thee, and the breasts which thou hast sucked. (28) But he said, Blessed rather are these who hear the word of God, and take heed of it.

§ 162. Jesus thus taught men to keep constantly on their guard against evil passions, which, though driven away at first with comparative ease, may return one day with more strength and tenacity. You may if you please personify bad passions as evil spirits, to adopt the terms of the Evangelists, and picture them as the evil spirits whose influence you have learned to fear. A weak-minded man, who yields readily to evil inspirations, because his tendencies are evil, takes a good resolution at last, and opposes a serious obstacle to the efforts made by the malevolent spirits to lead him astray. The familiar spirit who impelled him to evil, quits him, and seeks for some other easily influenced mind which he can master ; but he always keeps watch on him whom he has been obliged to abandon ; and as soon as he discovers any relaxation of vigilance, or faltering in his resolutions, he returns quickly to recover possession of his victim, and if he finds the resistance feeble, and that it does not arise from any sentiment of real purity, he avenges himself, and seeks aid, if needful, from the inferior spirits who surround, and second him.

But you must not interpret our words to mean that all your bad thoughts and actions result from an occult influence. It is not so, for if the germ of evil did not exist in you, it would not attract evil spirits ; but it is true that your tendencies, whether good or evil, attract spirits towards you who sympathize with those tendencies. You should therefore watch vigilantly all your most secret passions ; sweep your house with care, purify your soul, and guard well the door of

the sanctuary, that you may warn off all who are unworthy to approach by prayer and watchfulness.

(Matth. xii. 43 ; Luke xi. 24.)—The waterless places where the evil spirit wanders without finding rest, are pure men who give no heed to his suggestions. He seeks for occupation corresponding to his instincts, tendencies, and caprices, and can find none. You must remember that Jesus spoke to the Jews, who supposed that the unclean spirit "dwelt" in the subjugated man, and he allowed them to retain the belief that they might feel a greater horror of "possession." Consequently he spoke in such a manner that these men should understand him, and represented the impure spirit as seeking for rest in waterless places, and finding none—that is, wandering among strong men, and finding them deaf to his instigations. This is the spirit of the parable when freed from the letter. Seeking to penetrate into a man, being unable to enter, and being obliged to depart without finding a resting place ; that was intended as a lesson for the Jews to whom Jesus spoke.

(Matth. xii. 44 ; Luke xi. 24, 25.)—The man who casts out his evil tendencies from his soul, though only for a very short time, gives immediate access to the good feelings which are opposed to those evil instincts ; and your virtues are the ornament of your soul, so that when the evil spirit returns to the house from which he went out, he always finds it empty, swept, and garnished. Keep your soul, by a sentiment of real purity, firm and inaccessible to evil instincts, tendencies, and passions, and consequently to evil inspirations, suggestions, and instigations. Decorate your heart with virtues that the Lord may find it a dwelling worthy of him, and may delight in gradually developing your moral and intellectual progress, by granting you the assistance and inspirations of his good spirits whom you attract to yourselves.

We do not allude to the "sacrifice of the Eucharist." All the errors of the Church have sprung from false human interpretations based upon the letter, and not upon the spirit, which have misrepresented the teachings of the

Master. Do not imagine that the human body can become the dwelling (either temporary or eternal) of the Divinity, nor that the "real body and blood" of the Saviour, according to the expressions of the Roman Church, can become assimilated to human food, and subject to the laws of human digestion. Do not suppose that the tangible perispirit, resembling a corporeal human body (like a precious vase containing a still more precious essence), which Jesus temporarily assumed for the necessities of his earthly mission, could become digestible human food. At the period of his "ascension," it returned to the fluids, either of the superior regions, or of your planet, from whence it was derived. Do not suppose that the spirit of Jesus, that perfectly pure and immaculate essence, could make its dwelling in the human body. No; the communion of Christ was an emblematical repast, as we shall explain to you afterwards at the proper time. It was a last solemn appeal which he made to human fraternity, and to its practice. The communion of the disciples was a commemorative repast, as a remembrance and symbol. Christians of all sects, learn by the New Revelation which God sends you, and which we bring you in the name of Christ, that to the spirit all should be spiritual. The spirit receives "the body and blood of Jesus" emblematically; "the body" to nourish its soul; "the blood" to wash it from its stains; but matter has no participation whatever in this "sacrifice."

Whether you take your food before or after this "sacrifice" matters little. The best abstinence which you can impose on yourselves before accomplishing an act which should bring your spirit symbolically nearer to him who stooped to you to raise you to himself when he appeared on your earth, is to abstain from human superfluities. Prepare yourselves for this *family feast* by some privations which may be useful to your brethren, in the material, moral, and intellectual order. Impose some moral mortifications on yourselves, and invite to this thrice-holy repast those who were alienated from you, or from whom you were alienated. Invite them in thought, if you cannot do so in reality, by pardoning their

injuries with all your heart, and by forming the irrevocable resolution never to harbour any evil thoughts against them.

Practice continually these spiritual repasts, in common, which the Master's disciples took, as they took them with the Master. They took them thus until passions and evil instincts made it requisite to alter their arrangements in order to maintain the apparent order and communion ; for whoever approaches the Master's table with an evil feeling at heart is guilty of treason like Judas Iscariot.

Take this emblematic and commemorative repast as it was taken by the disciples of the Master ; take it in common, intelligently desiring to feel and act fraternally towards all ; invite and meet there all your brethren, Jews and Gentiles, whatever may be the external forms of religion which divide and separate you at present, and without reference to these differences of opinion ; and you will thus arrive at the period which has been foretold, when men shall no longer worship in this mountain, nor in Jerusalem ; but having become true Spiritists, and thus all brethren, will be the worshippers of the Father in spirit and in truth ; the true worshippers desired by the Father, when there shall be only one fold and one shepherd ; Jesus, the Christ of God, your Master, who is the protecting and ruling spirit of your planet and its humanity.

(Matth. xii. 45.)—The relapse is worse than the disease ; and everything had been done to enlighten and improve the generation to which Jesus spoke. Some of them indeed were touched by the teachings of the Good Shepherd, and endeavoured to reform ; but the good seed had fallen in stony places, and the evil passions, stifled for the moment, returned with renewed strength to their old dwelling, and the expiation was longer and more painful. May it not be thus with the generation to which Christ speaks to-day by the New Revelation, for he tells you, " Much will be demanded of him to whom much is given," and when those to whom the light is offered reject it, or avert or close their eyes to avoid perceiving it, they will have to render a much more severe account than those who live in ignorance and darkness.

(Luke xi. 27, 28.)—The woman who cried out to Jesus from among the people was a speaking medium, who spoke under the momentary inspiration of a guide, and thus led Jesus to reply. Everything was foreseen, to provide for the instruction of the people. The woman spoke wisely from the human point of view which regarded Jesus as the son of Mary and Joseph; and certainly if Mary had in appearance borne and suckled Jesus, this was a sign of her elevation; but her elevation was acquired before it was given her to fulfil this mission, whereas the men who surrounded Jesus were guilty sinners, who had hitherto deserved little; but it was given them to deserve much by accepting in faith, and practising, the precious lessons which they received. Jesus could thus say, "Blessed are they who receive the word of God, and practise it," for he understood the vast progress which those who entered *sincerely* on this new course were enabled to make.

We also say to you, our beloved charges, Happy are those who receive the light, and enlighten themselves by it. Those who thus hear the word of God and practise it in spirit and in truth will make great progress. Spiritists, who have been initiated during your humanity into the mysteries of life, you will shorten the time of your trials in the spiritual state, and above all, you will avoid the period of expiation, by keeping on your guard against yourselves. You will therefore progress during your human life, and you will progress still more rapidly as soon as you have returned to your real existence.

MATTHEW, CHAP. XII.—VERSES 46–50. MARK,
CHAP. III.—VERSES 31–35. LUKE, CHAP. VIII.
VERSES 19–21.

The brother, sister, and mother of Jesus.

Matth. xii. (46) And while he was yet speaking to the crowds, behold, his mother and his brethren stood without, seeking to speak to him. (47) And some one said to him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren stand without, seeking to speak to thee. (48) And he answered and said to him who spoke to him, Who is my mother, and who are my

brethren? (49) And stretching out his hand to his disciples, he said, Behold my mother and my brethren. (50) For whoever shall do the will of my Father in the heavens, he is my brother and sister and mother.

Mark iii. (31) Then came his brethren and his mother, and stood without, and sent to speak to him. (32) And the crowd sat round him, and they said to him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren are outside seeking thee. (33) And he answered and said to them, Who is my mother and my brother? (34) And looking round about upon those sitting round him, he saith, Behold my mother and my brethren. (35) For whoever shall do the will of God, he is my brother and sister and mother.

Luke viii. (19) And his mother and his brethren came to him, and could not get near him for the crowd. (20) And they sent to him, saying, Thy mother and thy brethren stand outside, desiring to see thee. (21) And he answered and said to them, My mother and my brethren are those who hear the word of God, and do it.

§ 163. Jesus, though not bound to Mary by any human ties, showed men the feelings of love and fraternity which ought to unite them.

He was the Good Shepherd who came to seek his wandering sheep; and what would be his object and desire? To gather them around him; and whatever they were, they were his beloved ones.

Jesus, whose purity and power render him, relatively to men, the only son of the Father, desired to show the crowd that he himself practised the principles which he taught, and to prove to them that all men were really sons of God, and really his brethren, provided only that they walked in the ways of the Lord. We have just called Jesus the only son of the Father in the sense that he is the most exalted spirit who watches over your planet. His pure essence, which has never fallen, approximates him to the nature of the universal Creator; and his unlimited power over everything which concerns your world partakes of the power of the Sovereign Master, with whom his purity places him in direct communion.

Mary and those who were called the brethren of Jesus undertook this journey under the spiritual influence of their guardian angels, combined with the personal thought that they must seek Jesus, to provide him with the means of nourishing the body. Mary, although a very elevated spirit, was yet subject to the influence of the matter which surrounded her, up to a certain point; and could not understand

that Jesus could endure such long-continued fatigue without taking the food requisite to sustain the body. She had the intuition of her coming fate ; but the past was with her as with you, covered with the veil of the flesh.

We cannot remind you too often that Mary as well as Joseph were led (in consequence of the revelation which had been made to them, and which was intended to be kept secret till after the accomplishment of the earthly mission of the Master) to regard Jesus as an exceptional being, great in the sight of God ; as the son of the Most High ; the son of God, miraculously incarnated, but nevertheless participating in humanity, and subject to the necessities of human existence. In the eyes of men, Jesus was a man like themselves, and the son of Joseph and Mary ; and he was thus regarded during all his earthly mission, until the time when this revelation, which had previously remained secret, became known to the multitude.

Mary and the so-called brethren of Jesus were inspired to go to him that they might give occasion for the Master's reply. The versions of Matthew, Mark, and Luke are exact, and mutually complete each other. Jesus stretched out his hand towards his disciples, and made his answer, looking round on the crowd with the powerful attraction of his gaze, the magnetic radiance of which attracted their attention as the loadstone attracts iron. Jesus designated his disciples as an example, and thus drew upon them the attention of the crowd who ought to imitate them.

When Jesus made this reply, his thought embraced the present and the future. His first object was, having regard to the motive which led to the journey of Mary and his brethren, to prove to men that his mission was above the family ties and the needs of human existence which they supposed to exist in his case. At the same time he desired to indicate, under a veil, that he was not bound to Mary and her companions by any human ties, and that there only existed the same spiritual bond and relationship between them, as between himself, his disciples, the multitude, and the human race in general. He also desired

to show that a bond of relationship and brotherhood according to the spirit, and not according to the flesh, was a reality which actually existed between himself and men, as well as between men themselves, with respect to those who should have done the will of his Father by listening to and obeying the word of God, whose messenger and representative he was.

He designed to prepare men to receive the New Revelation which we now bring you, at the time which he foretold. It frees the spirit from the letter and reveals his spiritual origin, his mission, and his powers as the delegate and representative of the Father towards your planet, at the formation of which he presided. He will complete its progress and destiny, and will also lead your humanity in the paths of progress, through charity, love, and knowledge, to perfection. He thus shows men that he is their brother in spirit and in truth, and also their Master, by his unlimited power over everything which concerns your planet.

He thus designed to prepare men to abandon the human belief in his divinity, when the time had come, through the teachings of the New Revelation. He foresaw that this belief would become general after the fulfilment of his earthly mission, conformably with the state of intelligence, the impressions, aspirations, and human interpretations of the period ; for this belief was to be a condition and means of progress, which would be useful in the present, and preparatory to the advent of the new era which now opens before you.

The expressions in Matthew xii. 47, &c., taken in conjunction with Matth. xiii. 55, 56, i. 25, Mark vi. 3, have led many to suppose that Joseph and Mary had other children besides Jesus.

This view has been shown to be erroneous by the discussions which have been carried on to your own times, and it should not now be revived. It should find no place in human discussions and controversies, after the New Revelation concerning the spiritual origin of Jesus, the circumstances of his appearance on the earth, the nature and

character of his mission in the past, present, and future, and of the elevation and purity of Mary and Joseph, and the nature and character of the mission which they fulfilled in the progress of the work.

Those who were called the brothers and sisters of Jesus were (not in reality, but in the eyes of men) only his near relations. The word *brother* in Hebrew had several meanings, and signified sometimes "brother," properly so-called, sometimes "cousin," and sometimes "relative." Among the Hebrews, children who were descended in the same direct line were regarded as brothers; if not actually, at least nominally. The Hebrews generally designated the children of brothers, whom you now call cousins, as brothers and sisters. Mary was not an only child; she had a sister, also called Mary, the wife of Cleophas, and the mother of James, Joseph, Simon, and Judas, who were called the brothers of Jesus.

What difference would it have made to men if Jesus had had brothers and sisters, humanly speaking? They would not have partaken of the essence of Jesus, the perfect spirit, who was visibly incarnated to human eyes by the tangible perispirit, presenting a bodily human appearance, which he assumed for the requirements and for the period of his earthly mission.

But it was not thus. Joseph and Mary were very elevated spirits, who endured the burden of the existence which they had accepted, but without being subject to unnecessary instincts. They were exiled for a time from their true country, but they had an intuitive remembrance of it, and all their wishes tended to return to it.

Mary was intuitively prepared for the mission which she was to fulfil in that great work of regeneration, of which the result was an example to all succeeding ages. She was and remained a virgin; and Joseph, though less elevated than Mary, understood the object of his material existence from the revelation of the angel, and wholly consecrated himself to his sacred mission.

Men have thought that the expression "first-born son" proved that Mary had other children besides Jesus; but, as

in the case of the expressions "brothers" and "sisters," the Hebrew word is capable of more than one interpretation ; and the "first-born son" or the "only son" would, in Hebrew phraseology, be expressed by the same word ; for the only child could not but be the first. If you could revert to Hebrew words and modes of expression, you would find this to be the correct explanation. The expression "first-born son" was used indifferently by the Hebrews to express the birth of a first child, whether his birth was followed by others or not. Words are often employed to express more than one idea, according to the context.

The Hebrew* expression (Matth. i. 25) used by the Evangelist here, signifies only that Mary had had no children previously. The term was not used with any idea of the considerations and interpretations which men have sought for in it, and hence it appears faulty to you. It was only employed to sum up what had been previously expressed, to emphasize the fact of Mary having been a virgin, and to reassert that the birth of Jesus was solely due to the operation of the Holy Spirit. You now know, through what we have revealed to you of the manner of the appearance of Jesus on the earth, the real meaning of these words ; and our previous explanations have also shown you how Mary remained a virgin, notwithstanding the apparent "birth," due to the operation of the Holy Spirit, and to the influence of spiritual magnetism ; which was only apparent, although taken for real by herself and others.

Jesus was the first-born and only son. After the fulfilment of his earthly mission, the Hebrews understood the term "first-born" to imply that his birth had been followed by others, as they did not wish to admit that his life was of a special character, as the revelation which had first been kept secret, and afterwards made public and subjected to human interpretations, had affirmed. But you, as Christians, have confined yourselves to the true sense of "only son ;" and hence we say that Jesus is the only son *to you*.

* The Gospels, as we have them, are in Greek ; but that of Matthew at least is believed to have been originally written in Hebrew.—TRANSL.

MATTHEW, CHAP. XIII.—VERSES 1-23. MARK,
CHAP. IV.—VERSES 1-20, 25. LUKE, CHAP. VIII.
VERSES 1-15, 18. CHAP. X.—VERSES 23, 24.

Parable of the Sower.

Matth. xiii. (1) And on the same day Jesus went out of the house, and sat down by the lake. (2) And large crowds gathered to him, so that he entered the boat and sat down, and the whole multitude stood on the shore. (3) And he taught them many things in parables, saying, Behold, the sower went forth to sow. (4) And as he was sowing, some fell near the road, and the birds came and devoured it. (5) But some fell in the rocky places, and immediately it sprang up, for it had no depth of earth. (6) But when the sun had risen, it was scorched, and having no root, it was destroyed. (7) But some fell among thistles, and the thistles sprang up and choked it. (8) But some fell on good ground, and yielded fruit, some an hundredfold, some sixtyfold, and some thirtyfold. (9) He that hath ears to hear let him hear. (10) And his disciples came to him, and said, Wherefore dost thou speak to them in parables? (11) And he answered and said to them, Because it is given to you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of the heavens, but it is not given to these. (12) For to whomsoever hath, it shall be given unto him, and he shall have abundance, and whomsoever hath not, even that which he hath shall be taken away from him. (13) Therefore I speak to them in parables, that seeing they shall not see, and hearing they shall not hear, nor understand. (14) And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah, which says, Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not comprehend, and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive. (15) For the heart of this people is frozen, and they hear dully with their ears, and they have closed their eyes, lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should repent, and I should heal them. (16) But blessed are your eyes, for they see, and your ears, for they hear. (17) For verily I say unto you, That many prophets and just men have desired to see what you see, and have not seen, and to hear what you hear, and have not heard. (18) Hear ye therefore the parable of the sower. (19) As for every one who heareth the word of the kingdom, and does not understand it, the wicked one cometh, and snatcheth away that which was sown in his heart; this is he who received the seed near the road. (20) But he who received the seed in stony places, is he who heareth the word, and immediately receiveth it with joy. (21) And he has no root in himself, but is a timeserver, and when affliction or persecution cometh on account of the word, he is immediately offended. (22) And he who receiveth seed among thistles is he who heareth the word, and the cares of this age and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful. (23) And he who receiveth the seed on good soil, is he who heareth the word and understandeth it, who then yields fruit, and produces some an hundredfold, some sixtyfold, and some thirtyfold.

Mark iv. (1) And he went again to teach near the lake, and a great crowd gathered to him, so that he embarked in the boat on the lake, and sat down, and all the crowd was on land near the lake. (2) And he taught them many things in parables, and said to them in his

teaching, (3) Give heed, Behold, the sower went forth to sow. (4) And it came to pass that while he was sowing, some fell near the road, and the birds of heaven came and devoured it. (5) But some fell on rocky places, where there was not much earth, and immediately it sprang up because it had no depth of earth. (6) But when the sun arose, it was scorched, and having no root, it was destroyed. (7) And others fell among thistles, and the thistles sprang up and choked it, and it yielded no fruit. (8) And other fell on good soil, and yielded fruit, springing up and increasing, and bore some thirtyfold, some sixtyfold, and some an hundredfold. (9) And he said to them, He that hath ears to hear, let him hear. (10) And when he was alone, those who were around him with the twelve asked him about the parable. (11) And he said to them, To you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God, but to those without all these things are in parables. (12) That seeing they may see, and may not perceive, and hearing they may hear and may not understand, lest at any time they should repent, and should be delivered from their sins. (13) And he saith to them, Do ye not understand this parable? and how will you understand all the parables? (14) The sower soweth the word. (15) And these are they near the road. When the word is sown and they do not listen, then cometh Satan, and snatcheth away that which was sown in their hearts. (16) And these are like those who were sown in stony places, who, when they hear the word, immediately receive it with joy, (17) And have no root in themselves, but are time-servers; then cometh affliction or persecution through the word, and they are immediately offended. (18) And these are they who were sown among thistles: these are they who hear the word, (19) And the cares of this age, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the desire of other things having entered in, choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful. (20) And these are they who were sown on good ground, who hear the word and receive it, and bring forth fruit, some thirtyfold, some sixtyfold, and some an hundredfold. (25) For whomsoever hath, to him it shall be given; and whomsoever hath not, even that which he hath shall be taken away from him.

Luke viii. (1) And it came to pass afterwards that he went through town and village, preaching, and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom of God. (2) And the twelve were with him, and certain women who had been healed by him of evil spirits and infirmities; Mary who is called Magdalene, from whom he cast out seven demons, (3) And Joanna, the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward, and Susanna, and many others, who supplied him from their possessions. (4) And a large crowd having assembled, from those who had gone out to him from the city, he spoke to them in parables. (5) The sower went out to sow his seed, and as he was sowing, some fell near the path, and was trodden under foot, and the winged things of heaven devoured it. (6) And some fell on the rock, and having grown, it was uprooted, because it had no moisture. (7) And some fell in the midst of the thistles, and the thistles grew up with it, and choked it. (8) And some fell on the good soil, and grew up, and yielded fruit an hundredfold. Speaking these things, he said, Let him hear who hath ears to hear. (9) And his disciples questioned him, saying, What may this parable be? (10) And he said, To you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God, but to the rest in parables, that seeing they may not see, and that hearing they may not hear. (11) And this is the parable; the seed is the word of God. (12) And those near the road are those who hear; then cometh the devil, and snatcheth away the word from their hearts, lest they

should believe and be saved. (13) And those on the rock are those who, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root. They believe for a time, and in time of temptation they stand aloof. (14) And those falling among thistles are those who hear, and going away, are choked by the deceitfulness of riches and of the pleasures of life, and bring no fruit to perfection. (15) And those in the good soil are those who listen with a good and pure heart. They receive the word, and bring forth fruit in patience. (18) Take heed, therefore, how you hear; for to whomsoever hath, it shall be given unto him, and from whomsoever hath not, even that which he seemeth to have shall be taken away from him.

Luke x. (23) And turning his gaze towards his disciples, he said, Blessed are your seeing eyes which see. (24) For I say unto you that many prophets and kings have desired to see the things which you see, and they have not seen, and to hear the things which you hear, and they have not heard.

§ 164. The parable of the sower requires no explanation. That which Jesus gave to his disciples, as far as they were able to receive it in the incarnate state, for the fulfilment of their mission, is enough to enable you to understand it. Nevertheless it will be useful for you who are Spiritists, or about to become so, to receive special explanations developing the whole meaning of the words of Jesus, by freeing the spirit from the letter. But we must first teach you how to understand the words spoken by Jesus to the multitude in the parable, and those addressed to the Apostles as its explanation; for some words here spoken by the gentle and indulgent Master—the Good Shepherd, who would not desire that one of his sheep should be lost—seem to contradict all the actions of his apparently human life.

The generation of spirits who lived at the time of the mission of Jesus, was composed of proud and vain spirits, wilfully blind and deaf, rebellious to all authority, and who, even before incarnation, had rejected every opportunity offered them to improve themselves. They were the children of the Hebrews who had marched from Egypt; spirits who had continued their experiences for centuries without losing the tendency to revolt and murmuring which was characteristic of the Hebrews from the very commencement of their nationality. If they had been capable of receiving the unveiled truth, they would have made themselves still more guilty by refusing to submit to it.

How admirable is the foreseeing goodness of this pattern of perseverance and gentleness, who spared the rash and rebellious child the punishment which he had deserved, by not imposing a command upon him which he knew him to be unable to bear !

As the words of Jesus were veiled, those who wished to improve themselves could, like the Apostles, attempt to discover their hidden meaning. Those, on the contrary, who would have been unwilling to bow to a law which imposed too heavy a reformation on their evil natures, were only guilty of indifference in not attempting to fathom mysteries which they did not understand.

When Jesus said that he only spoke to them in parables and similitudes, lest they might repent, he spoke of those who would be drawn into the movement on the first impulse, and would have made an effort to advance, but would soon have been arrested by their evil instincts, and have relapsed in such a manner as to draw upon themselves a severer punishment. For you must remember that much is given to him who already possesses something. He who desires progress and struggles to deserve it will be upheld on all sides ; but from him who hath not, even the little that he hath shall be taken away, because he is careless about keeping what has been given to him, and neglects it, and allows bad passions to take possession of his heart ; and instead of the few virtues which he might have possessed, and which he has neglected, he will be assailed by vices and evils which will oppress him for centuries.

Although the explanation of the parable which Jesus gave to his disciples was made public in the Gospels, as well as by the apostles and disciples, it was only after the fulfilment of his earthly mission, when the multitude had been strongly impressed by the words which he had spoken, and the actions which he performed up to the period of his "Ascension." They were thus prepared to hear the explanation with profit from the apostles and disciples ; as well as other lessons which the Master had given them, in the degree and manner in which they were able to receive it. They were

also prepared to receive the Gospel narrative at a later period, which, moreover, was intended to be the book of progress, for all ages, either under the dominion of the letter, or of the spirit; for it is the source from which light and truth must always radiate.

(Matth. xiii. 10-13; Mark iv. 11-20, 25; Luke viii. 10-18.)—The following words express the thought of the Master, when the spirit is freed from the letter, apart from all uncertainty respecting the meaning of the text.

“To you it has been given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of the heavens, and the secrets of the kingdom of God; but to them it has not been given, but has only been laid before them in parables.” At the period when Jesus spoke, it was given to the apostles and disciples to know these mysteries, because they were more elevated spirits than the men around them, and were prepared to disseminate the truths which Jesus brought to the world; and in order that they might do so, it was necessary that they should first understand them; and he gave them only what they were able to receive, and needed for the accomplishment of their mission.

It is the same in your own age. Your intelligence has advanced, and we bring you revelations of the invisible world, the secrets of the kingdom of God; and we will enable you to understand them, that you in your turn may be able to diffuse this knowledge throughout the world, and that you also may go from town to town, and from village to village, preaching repentance, and proclaiming like the disciples, “Hasten, for the time is at hand.”

The expressions, “The kingdom of the heavens,” “the kingdom of God,” are images to express the happiness of the blessed; for to attract the attention of those who regard only matter, it is needful to present a material figure of that other life, which they would be unable to comprehend if it were shown to them in its full spirituality.

“The mysteries of the kingdom of the heavens,” and “the secrets of the kingdom of God,” were the knowledge, previously unknown, of the means of attaining it. Until the

revelations of Jesus, men had never formed a definite idea of the other life ; and their very vague intuitions regarding it had left them indifferent about the happiness and mode of existence which they might hope for beyond the tomb. Jesus came to raise the veil, and to enlighten their intelligence, but the veil was only lifted, and the light was still veiled. At the present day, we are continuing to raise the veil which hides the other life from you ; and although it may not yet be raised entirely, we allow the light to shine brighter ; for your eyes are stronger, and better able to bear it. But it does not yet shine in all its lustre ; you are not yet prepared to receive a complete revelation ; and the man would be very presumptuous who fancied that he had fathomed the depths of these mysteries, which are impenetrable to your human intelligences. Even you who are Spiritists must wait till you have arrived at the age of reason to receive all the revelations of the invisible world. Let your hearts seek to understand, enlarge the circle of your knowledge, and develop your intelligence ; and when the right time has come, you shall know all the mysteries of the kingdom of the heavens, and all the secrets of the kingdom of God.

You will know them when you have attained to complete moral purity ; and by acquiring this you will gradually obtain a knowledge of the omnipotence, justice, goodness, and infinite mercy of God, and of his designs and works in infinite space ; of the elements, and of the active properties of the fluids, as well as the knowledge of the means by which you may obtain the favours of the Lord, by attaining the good which leads to success, and avoiding the evil which must be punished.

(Matth. xiii. 12 ; Mark iv. 25 ; Luke viii. 18.)—You know that the spirit who clothes himself in a fleshly envelope brings with him the treasure which he has been able to gather in previous existences, and you can understand that this treasure would increase much more rapidly when it was based on solid foundations. He who is born with the ardent desire of advancing rapidly will make every effort to succeed ; and the light will be so much the greater for him,

as he desires more ardently to see it. We repeat that much will be given to him who hath abundance ; that is, he who longs for progress and strives to attain it will be upheld on all sides.

(Matth. xiii. 12 ; Mark iv. 25 ; Luke viii. 18.)—These words must be understood according to the spirit, and not according to the letter ; for Jesus added, “He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.” They were intended to render his address still more striking to the human intelligence of his hearers ; and he only expressed himself thus to give more emphasis to the image. However little progress an incarnate spirit may have made before his arrival on your globe, he has always acquired some. The concealed thought of the Master was this : “From whomsoever hath little, shall be taken away even that he hath ; and from him who hath not, and believes he hath, shall be taken away even that which he believes he hath.”

As we have already told you, the reason of this is, that he who has little is careless about taking care of what has been given him. When he has neglected the virtues which he might have possessed, they will be replaced by vices which will oppress him for ages, for evil is actually rooted in the neglect of the practice of good. Men, who refuse alms to the wretched with indifference, it is not your evil heart which urges you, but a kind of mental torpor, which hinders you from perceiving the good which you might be able to accomplish ; and you are therefore wanting in charity. He who enters upon a course which he knows to be evil, and neglects to quit it from indifference, will fall into all the snares which hedge his path. He who is not devoted, becomes selfish ; he who is not charitable, becomes hard ; he who is not humble in mind and heart, becomes proud and boastful ; he who is not resigned to the will of God, becomes rebellious, and murmurs against his decrees ; thus evil is always the consequence of good neglected. The spirit does not retrograde, but it remains stationary, which amounts to the same thing as regards its active and progressive essence.

He who has not gathered, and brings little from his former existences when he begins his human life, will grow still more negligent. He has no desire to advance, and as he does not acquire anything, he loses in the sense that stagnation at length becomes a source of pain and remorse to the spirit.

You are destined to unceasing progress, and you should therefore march forward, but with humility of heart and soul, and urged by no other motive than the love of God and the neighbour. Pray always to God to uphold your desire for moral and intellectual progress, and that he may permit you to labour for him alone, by aiding in the moral and intellectual progress of your brethren. Ask, for the more you ask the more you shall receive ; and the more you exert yourselves, the more will your path be smoothed of the obstacles which now impede you. It is in this sense that much is given to him who hath much already, and that he who hath little is deprived, or rather deprives himself, of what he hath already ; for the want of progress is a hundred times worse to the spirit than the loss of his treasure to the greedy miser.

“From him who hath not, shall be taken away even that which he seemeth to have.” In these words, Jesus strove to counteract the inborn pride in men, who, however little they may deserve, always rate themselves far above their real worth. After death, the spirit sees clearly at length what it is, and what it is worth ; and then its pride becomes a source of pain and remorse to it, on account of the obstacle which it has imposed to its progress, and the faults to which it has led. It is in this sense also that from him who hath not shall be taken even that which he seemeth to have, or rather he robs himself by his own act, under the burden of expiation.

(Matth. xiii. 13, 14 ; Mark iv. 11, 12 ; Luke viii. 10.)—The interpretation of these words is falsified by the deficiencies of your language, and by copyists and translators. The sense and import of the idea, apart from all uncertainty in the interpretation of the text, is contained in the words of

Jesus, "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear." When his words are correctly understood in spirit and in truth, they do not and can not contradict all the actions of his apparently human life.

In the eyes of Jesus, the Shepherd of wandering souls, the men of that age were like green fruits, which too hot a sun would have withered instead of ripening, but the gardener carefully shades them till they have had time to grow; and then, when they have once arrived at the point of maturity, the rays of light and heat which have previously been withheld from them are allowed to ripen them with their beneficent influence.

Jesus himself says, "Many are called, but few are chosen;" not according to the human interpretation which the Churches give of these words, that he has drawn all men around him to select only a small number, and relegate the great bulk of mankind to the place of torment where "there is wailing and gnashing of teeth," but because they are hard and green fruits, and can only be brought gradually to the beneficent sun which must develop and ripen them; and for this object, the sun veils his light and heat.

Do you speak to a little child as you speak to a man? Do you propound moral and philosophical questions which you will make him understand when he is twenty years old? No, you speak to him in such a manner as to attract his young intelligence, always allowing him to perceive that you will tell him more at a later period, and teach him what he is too young and ignorant to receive rationally. Do you act thus to hinder his progress, or that he should be unable to understand or to learn when he is once a man? Not so; it is because the fruit is green, and that you regulate the light and heat for him, lest the excess of these two beneficent principles should act too early, and should weaken him instead of strengthening him.

You can understand that Jesus, in his overflowing mercy, could not voluntarily deprive human creatures of the chance of salvation which he offered them; on the contrary, his words always gave indolent spirits the excuse of not under-

standing, lest they should be drawn into a fault ; and the verses which we have quoted from the three Gospels must be considered to be only a mode of speaking addressed to the intelligence of the men of that age.

The Apostles were surprised at the veiled language of the Master, which seemed to them to be confused, and sought for an explanation. Jesus could not tell them the motives which guided his conduct, for they were themselves to be the future instruments of his work, and were to receive only what they were able, and required at that time for the success and accomplishment of their mission in the circumstances which were prepared for it.

Consequently Jesus gave them a reason which would satisfy them, and also inspire them with pity for those whom the will of the Master left in the darkness of the parable, and moved them with greater love and gratitude towards him who had chosen them to be initiated into these mysteries.

Surely he who came to teach men to expiate their offences, could not help freely pardoning the offences of the guilty ; but where there is no repentance, there can be no remission of offences. Jesus foresaw that they would relapse, and avoided undervaluing the faults of those who might have entered on a new course hastily and without reflection, and would thus have seemed to men to deserve the remission of their sins. But being unrepentant and weak, they would soon have fallen back into a worse state than the first, and would thus have deserved a more severe punishment. Jesus desired to save them from this, and in his provident goodness, he adapted the chances of falling to the rebellious, and also adapted the chances of ingratitude to hardened and ungrateful offenders.

You know that during the mission of Christ, the "miracles" which he performed on the sick made a great impression on the minds of the spectators ; but many who were struck by them at the time, only regarded the material act ; and just as you rarely retain much gratitude towards the skilful surgeon who has saved you from danger, thus the

patients of the physician of souls soon forgot the material or spiritual aid which they had received. Thus Jesus avoided the subject of "miracles," and only spoke of them in a veiled manner, when among surroundings where he knew that his acts and preaching could bear no fruit as long as the ground was barren, and could only produce ephemeral flowers.

It is just the same spiritually. The incarnate spirit who neglects the light and does not seek to approach it, will be punished by his own indifference ; but he who is attracted by its blessed rays, and begins to enlighten himself, and then shuts his eyes and recoils from it, will have to expiate his wavering and his treason towards himself ; not because the Lord lets his vengeance fall specially on him, but on account of his own remorse, caused by the incessant sight of the good which he might have done, and the progress which he might have made. This floats continually before his eyes like a prize which escapes him at the moment that he expected to grasp it.

You cannot draw back. If you once enter on this path you must advance unceasingly, holding out both your hands right and left to aid those who cannot advance alone. Act with prudence and reflection, and always say to those who would follow you, "We march forward without stopping ; for he who stops, draws back, and he who draws back, falls."

(Matthew xiii. 18, 19 ; Mark iv. 16 ; Luke x. 23, 24.)—Jesus here alludes to incarnate spirits. The prophets and just men of whom he spoke foresaw the coming of the Messiah, and would have been happy if it had taken place during their incarnation.

(Matthew xiii. 18, 19 ; Mark iv. 15 ; Luke x. 12.)—Here, "the word of the kingdom" denotes the instructions given by Jesus to teach men how to fit themselves for the kingdom of the heavens ; for although he was not God himself, he could nevertheless speak personally the word of the heavens, being the delegate of God, made flesh to the eyes of men, who believed him to be incarnate like them-

selves in a bodily human envelope ; but in reality made flesh in the sense of being visibly incarnated in a tangible perisprit, or incorruptible body.

The expressions, "the wicked one ; Satan ; the devil," used to express the same idea, are synonymous, and under a figurative name and as an emblem, they express the evil spirits of error and lying ; the inferior, impure, thoughtless, or perverse spirits. When Jesus spoke of the wicked one snatching away the word of the kingdom from the hearts of men, lest they should believe and be saved, he alluded to the evil spirits who gather round those who do not resist them, and who strive to prevent their rising above the unsatisfactory condition in which they find themselves.

The human belief in the personification called Satan, with his eternal hell, was originally due to the necessity of materializing such emblems, to render them tangible to matter, and was a curb, and a means of salutary terror during the previous ages through which mankind has passed.

Would you prevent the human spirit from modifying truths according to its necessities ? Would you prevent man from making use of man ? the intelligent from domineering over the credulous ? the strong from crushing the weak, and making use of every means in his power for this end ? And what means could be more suitable for this purpose than terror, in the age of ignorance and barbarism when the reign of Lucifer began ; a means which could appeal as powerfully to the prejudices of the strong as to the weak ? a yoke which rested on all shoulders alike, and a curb which overmastered all natures ?

Do not find fault ; that which has been in antiquity among the Hebrews, and then among yourselves, was to be. The law of love, gentleness, and charity, and the law of Reincarnation which we now reveal to you openly, both in its principle and in its consequences, shows you the path which you must traverse to enter, pure and holy, into the kingdom of the heavens, or in other words, arrive at perfection through reparation, expiation and progress. It likewise shows you the God of love, the good Father of

all, leading you thus to himself, through his omnipotence, and under the influence of his infinite justice, goodness, and mercy. But such teachings would have had no restraining power in former ages.

It was needful to oppose the fire of human passions by a fire yet more consuming, which might inspire terror in those iron men who would otherwise have devoured each other without mercy. That which has been, was to be; the source was good, but man has troubled it, and the gloom of human passions has continued to darken it. We now re-establish the brightness of the pure stream by the New Revelation; and the source of life, instead of rushing over the rocks which it has carried away, will now flow clear and peacefully over the golden sand which will form its bed.

Away with these vain terrors of barbarous ages, though useful then! Away with the oppression of man by man; the ignorant must no longer be the prey of the instructed, for knowledge must become universal; the strong must no longer crush the weak, for he should only make use of his strength to aid him; the powerful shall no longer trample down the lowly, but shall anxiously stoop to lift him in his arms, and aid him to raise his head towards heaven.

Every age has had its own developments, all designed to contribute to the progress of humanity. Compare, judge and profit by them, but do not find fault.

(Matthew xiii. 20, 21; Mark iv. 16, 17; and Luke viii. 13.)—Those who fall away in time of temptation are those who yield to the opportunities which present themselves of falling back into their old practices, and thus again become deaf and rebellious to the word of God; and a fresh prey to their faults and errors, under the influence of evil spirits who stimulate the evil desires which they are unable to resist. Those who are immediately offended when trouble or persecution come on account of the word are those who are wanting in energy, and are terrified at trouble or persecution, and draw back. In thus speaking to the Apostles and disciples, Jesus alluded to both physical and moral

tribulations and persecutions. From a spiritual point of view all tribulations and persecutions are moral. It is ridicule which is poured upon the doctrine and its sectaries. We say sectaries in allusion to the false, though currently received opinion, that you who simply seek for light and truth in the way marked out by Jesus, are trying to found a new sect. There are a thousand snares with which they oppose you, and they will continue to do so for a time; for hitherto, friends, you have walked on roses,* and scarcely a thorn has shown itself; but the period when you will be met by serious opposition is approaching; the Church and its adherents will rise like a barrier to arrest your efforts, and the barrier will be so much the more formidable, because it will always appear to vanish at your approach, to rise up still more formidably immediately; but its efforts will be in vain. The ridicule which it endeavours to use against you will recoil upon itself; the anathema which it will launch against you will recoil upon itself; and you will one day behold it, humbled by its fruitless efforts, open its gates to receive you, and turn to you yourselves to ask for the light which it has sought to turn into darkness.

It is these little oppositions which rise up, and frighten those who are without energy, and who dare not brave public opinion when they find it opposed to themselves; and who shrink before the family warfare which has arisen, and will rise up more and more; for we tell you to-day, like Jesus, that we do not come to bring peace but division. Let not those who are exposed to this domestic opposition be offended, and abandon the cause which they have taken up; for their prospects would be imperilled; and your prospects, Spiritists, are peace and progress, and an eternal farewell to the miseries of your earth. Do not therefore abandon your cause.

Reply gently to private attacks, and answer public attacks with reason, firmness, and dignity, and adopt as your motto,

* These words were medianimically dictated on Dec. 18, 1862. (ED.) Compare vol. i. p. 328, and note.—TRANSL.

Patience and resignation. If you are sustained by faith, you will overcome all the obstacles which oppose you, and which will crumble under your feet like a heap of sand. Take courage, and do not be offended, for you have no right to draw back.

(Matthew xiii. 22 ; Mark iv. 18 ; Luke viii. 14.)—Those in whom the word is stifled by the cares of the world, and who yield no fruit, are those who sacrifice everything to the material instincts and appetites which cause matter to predominate over spirit, or even make spirit subservient to matter.

(Matthew xiii. 23 ; Mark iv. 20 ; Luke viii. 15.)—Those sown upon good ground are those who strive, each according to his intellectual and moral development, to practise the word of God sown in their hearts, first by his Christ, and then by the Spirit of Truth. These are they who cultivate his word with patience ; that is, those who having evil tendencies to contend with, use all their perseverance to repress them, and to replace them by the good seed.

There is nothing selfish in the law of love. Jesus preached before the multitude, that his words might be heard, and fall upon good ground. You also, new disciples of the Master, should raise your voice to-day, whenever you can hope to make it heard. The seed which the good soil has yielded should be sown again in its turn, that every seed which has been gathered may give birth to another abundant harvest. This is the thought of Jesus ; and he who represents the good ground, and has received the good seed, ought, when he collects it for himself, to make use of the seed which he has gathered by sowing it among his brethren, that it may lead to the same intellectual and moral development among them that he himself has acquired. This he must do first by example, and then by precept and teaching.

MATTHEW, CHAP. XIII.—VERSES 24—30.

Parable of the Darnel in the Field.

(24) He laid before them another parable, saying, The kingdom of the heavens is like unto a man sowing good seed in his field. (25) And while the men slept, his enemy came and sowed darnel among the corn, and went away. (26) And when the corn grew up, and bore seed, then appeared the darnel also. (27) And the servants of the master of the house came and said to him, Master, did you not sow good seed in your field; whence then has it darnel? (28) And he said to them, An unfriendly man has done this. And the servants said to him, Then do you wish us to go and gather them? (29) And he said, No, lest in gathering the darnel you root out the corn with it. (30) Let both grow together till the harvest, and at harvest-time I will say to the reapers, Gather first the darnel, and bind it in bundles to burn it, but gather the corn into my granary.

§ 165. Spirits are not all at the same stage of development. Some among you are pupils, while others are at the commencement of their moral experiences. Would it then be necessary, in order to effect the renovation of your spiritual generation, to overwhelm the whole material generation by a new deluge like that described by the ancients? Not so; the darnel grows side by side with the good corn, but at each harvest, the darnel is sent to be purified in the fire of expiation, and the good corn is gathered into the granaries of the Lord. Do not misunderstand us when we spoke of the deluge as it has been described. We only intended to present the idea of a universal catastrophe to your minds; for if there had ever been such a deluge as that recorded by tradition, we should not have said "as the ancients have described it." There was no universal deluge, for there has never been a universal cataclysm, but often partial renovations. The successive transformations which have happened from the time that your planet arose from incandescent vapours till your own days were successively designed for the preparation and progress of the mineral, vegetable and animal kingdoms, and subsequently of the human kingdom, in order to prepare for the future purification and transformation of the planetary, mineral, vegetable, animal and human fluids, by progressive, gradual, and continuous steps. At every stage in the progress of humanity, the ele-

ments must change their nature ; matter must become purified, and must progress under the action of spirit ; and the earth must provide for the necessities of the generations of men who live upon it.

“The enemy of the master of the house,” who sowed the darnel was an expression adapted to the comprehension of those who listened to the parable. Was it not necessary that they should be able to understand it?

In speaking thus, Jesus alluded to the evil intelligences, whether incarnate or not, who seek to destroy the good seed which the good spirits have sown in the heart of man. Thus the darnel grows up beside the good corn, for the good corn (that is, the pure heart) rejects the bad seed, and its contact cannot injure it.

When the servants inquired, “Do you wish us to go and weed out the darnel?” the master answered, “No, lest in gathering the darnel you root out the corn with it.” In this part of the parable Jesus desired to restrain the zeal of the Apostles, who might have been urged on too far by the desire of advancing humanity, and in the endeavour to repress abuses, might have alarmed well-meaning but simple men, and have turned them aside.*

This is a lesson both for the present and the future. The great secret in teaching eternal truths is to appropriate them to the intelligence of those who are to receive them ; otherwise those who would have accepted the principle if it had been presented to them in a form in accordance with their own point of view, may be repelled from it, either because they are dazzled by its splendour, or because it appears to be surrounded by too great difficulties.

(V. 30.)—The harvest is the period when spirits quit their fleshly envelope, and return to the world of spirits. If they are in the condition of darnel to be burned, they first suffer expiation in the errant state, and are purified in the fire of moral sufferings and tortures, and are then sent to

* As missionaries discourage the taste for flowers, and other harmless, if not elevating tendencies, among the natives of the South Sea Islands and elsewhere.—TRANSL.

redeem and expiate the past, and to progress by means of new experiences, and are reincarnated either in worlds inferior to yours, or on your own, according to their tendencies, and their guilt. But those who are in the condition of the good corn which is to be gathered into the granary, are sent to higher worlds than yours, to perfect themselves, and to advance further by means of fresh experiences.

From this double point of view, the harvest is constantly taking place, both in the past, the present, and the future. Again, the definite period of the harvest as regards your planet will be the time when the darnel will no longer be permitted to grow on your earth beside the good corn, but will be uprooted and cast out by the expulsion of all the guilty spirits who have remained rebellious, who will be removed from your planet, and cast down to the inferior planets, when your earth will no longer produce anything but good corn, having become part of the kingdom of God, reserved exclusively for the residence of good spirits. In this passage, the reapers are the superior spirits who are charged with watching over the expiations of guilty spirits in the errant state, and with the classifying of those who have passed through their experiences well, and have deserved admission into worlds higher than your earth.

MATTHEW, CHAP. XIII.—VERSES 31-35. MARK,
CHAP. IV.—VERSES 26-34. LUKE, CHAP. XIII.—
VERSES 18-22.

*The Grain of Mustard-Seed—The Leaven and the Meal.—
Seed sown in the Ground.*

Matth. xiii. (31) He laid before them another parable, saying, The kingdom of the heavens is like a mustard-seed, which a man took and sowed in his field, (32) Which is indeed the least of all seeds, but when it has grown, it is larger than the herbs, and becomes a tree, so that the birds of heaven come and rest in its branches. (33) He spoke another parable to them: The kingdom of the heavens is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, until the whole was leavened. (34) All these things Jesus spoke to the crowds in parables, and without a parable spoke he not unto them. (35) That the word spoken through the prophet might be fulfilled saying, I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter things which have been concealed from the foundation of the world.

Mark iv. (26) And he said, Thus is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground, (27) And should lie down and rise up by night and day, and the seed should grow and increase when he is not looking; (28) For the earth bringeth forth fruit of itself, first the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear. (29) And when the grain is ripe, immediately he sends the sickle, for the harvest has come. (30) And he said, To what shall I liken the kingdom of God? or by what parable shall I symbol it? (31) As a mustard-seed, which when it is sown in the earth, is the least of all the seeds on the earth, (32) And when it is sown, it springs up and becomes larger than all the herbs, and shoots out great branches, so that the birds of heaven can rest under its shadow. (33) And he spoke the word to them in many such parables, as they were able to listen. (34) And without a parable spake he not to them, and when he was alone, he expounded all things to his disciples.

Luke xiii. (18) And he said, To what is the kingdom of God like, and to what shall I compare it? (19) It is like a mustard-seed which a man took and cast into his garden, and it grew and became a great tree, and the birds of heaven rested in its branches. (20) And he said again, To what shall I liken the kingdom of God? (21) It is like leaven which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, until the whole was leavened. (22) And he went through towns and villages, preaching, and making his way towards Jerusalem.

§ 166. By the parable in which he compared the kingdom of the heavens to a mustard-seed, Jesus showed the multitude that however small might be the starting-point towards the heavens, it might nevertheless develop itself, and lead to great results.

Such was the end and object of this parable, so far as it referred to the period at which Jesus spoke; but his thought had reference both to the present and to the future. From a spiritual point of view, the kingdom of the heavens is compared to a mustard-seed which became a great tree, on which the birds rested, as a metaphor. By the mustard-seed you must understand the original starting-point of your planet and its humanity, in their rudimentary condition. The secret development of the mustard-seed is the formation of the earth, and its appearance, growth, and transformation into a great tree typify the laws of nature acting through spiritual agency according to the immutable will of the Omnipotent Ruler, and the phases of the formation of your planet in its latent state, and of the mineral, vegetable, animal, and human kingdoms; their appearance, development, and progress, the phases of physical purification and transforma-

tion of your planet, and the physical, moral, and intellectual purification and transformation of your humanity.

The branches of the tree on which the birds rest signify the degree of development to which your planet must attain to become a dwelling-place of peace and happiness to which purified spirits will come to advance with it on a new and ascending path towards the progress which they must make to arrive at perfection, with the help and assistance of the spirits of the Lord, under the direction and guidance of the Master.

By the parable in which Jesus compared the kingdom of the heavens, or the kingdom of God, to leaven hidden in three measures of meal till the whole was leavened, he designed to make men comprehend the secret, but continued, action of the seed which he sowed in their hearts. Centuries have developed it; but for the most part it has scarcely risen above the ground. How far you still are from the period when this seed shall become a tree, like the mustard-seed, and its leafy branches shall shelter the faithful!

Jesus only spoke of *three* measures of meal to accommodate his language to the customs of the age; for this was the quantity of meal that it was usual to leaven at one time. From a spiritual point of view, the kingdom of God, as compared with the leaven in the parable, typifies the regenerative influence which Jesus cast into the hearts of men by his moral doctrine, words, acts, teaching and example. This it is which by its secret and continuous action in the past, which we shall hasten in the present and in the future by the New Revelation, leads the spirit to the elevation and purity which enable it to rejoice in divine felicity, wherever it may be. The leavening of the whole is the attainment of the object, when this elevation and purity have been acquired. You have all this leaven in your hearts, which the Lord has placed there, and we are waiting till the fermentation (which we urge on so far as we are permitted) shall have leavened the meal to the needful extent. We tell you like Jesus that our words will not pass

away, but your human generations will succeed each other many times before the leaven shall have leavened all the meal.

Progress must pursue the regular course which it has followed until this age, resembling, though in inverse proportions, the ball which rolls down a mountain. We say inversely, because the ball rolls down the mountain, whereas progress ascends at first by slow and painful steps; but little by little the first difficulties are surmounted; it finds a passage more easily, and at length finds the path carved in the rock, which will lead it to the summit. Then it acquires its full impulse, and bounding like an ibex pursued by hunters, it leaps forward, springs over every obstacle, and at length reaches the blessed haven which it longed to attain. The beginning of the course of the ball which descends the mountain, as a figure of the progress which ascends it, is first slow, and then grows more rapid little by little, and when it has nearly arrived at the middle of the course which it has to traverse, its speed increases in proportion to the impulse which it has received. It will soon bound forwards towards the goal; but we tell you again that it has scarcely reached the middle of its course at present.

Do not be too ready to believe in the speedy regeneration of your planet. Work zealously at the moral and intellectual improvement of men; and when the moral work shall advance (and you are scarcely at the beginning, not of the work, but even of the idea) you will then perceive the physical nature of your planet change its aspect; but before reconstructing the habitation on a new plan, it is needful that the inhabitants should be prepared to enter it. Everything in the divine work is linked together; matter is conformed to matter; but when your moral progress has been sufficient to fit you to live a spiritual rather than an animal life, you will see the appearance of your planet gradually change; its material constitution will be purified in the same proportion; and when the necessities of humanity change their nature, the products of the soil will

likewise change their character. Matter was not created for the spirit, but for the body; and the less dominion the flesh exerts over you, the less will become your material necessities; and consequently the more will your planet be modified to assimilate it to the changes of your nature. Your planet and your humanity are destined to purify themselves, and to advance without ceasing towards fluidic conditions; for this is the universal goal.

(Mark iv. 26-29.)—By this parable Jesus showed the multitude that the spirit of man must, like seed cast into the earth, pass through the stages of germination, growth, transformation, development and fructification, and arrive at moral and intellectual maturity before it can be handed over at harvest time to the care of the reapers who are commissioned to gather it for the kingdom of God.

Jesus said to the multitude, speaking of the seed cast into the ground, "the seed should grow and increase he knows not how," because at the age when he addressed them, men, and especially those to whom he spoke, troubled themselves little to search into the source of things, or to endeavour to understand them, and to follow their course. You must remember that, of all the ancient nations, the Hebrew nation was one of the most ignorant, and accepted, with repugnance, the progress which had been made, and was forced upon it, but was so proud of race that it never sought to make any of its own accord.

Until your own times, the seed has sprouted and increased without man knowing how. Progress has been made without his perceiving its secret springs, in the occult influence of the spirits of the Lord, seconded by that of the missionary spirits on your earth.

But for his apathy man would long since have been able to notice the workings of the divine seed; but those who received the seed were proud and vain like the Hebrews, and permitted it to grow without trying to study its phenomena. The New Revelation will teach you the manner of your progress by the light which Spiritism throws on the influences around you, and it likewise enables you to study

and understand the phenomena of the germination and growth of the divine seed.

But whether man is born or dies, and whether he sleeps or wakes, progress pursues its course, and in time, by expiation and reincarnation the guilty and rebellious will make progress, and the spiritual light will shine over all your earth, and enlighten the steps of all men. Woe to those who wilfully remain blind ! for they too must progress, but for this they must suffer those long and painful expiations on the inferior planets which have become necessary for their moral improvement and progress.

From a spiritual point of view, the parable of the seed cast into the ground is the emblem of the ages that man has traversed in the path of progress since his first appearance on your globe, and of the ages which he must still traverse before his regeneration, for the searching eyes of the Master penetrated both the past and the future. The blade which the earth has produced in consequence of the germination and growth of the seed denotes the time which preceded the appearance of Jesus on your earth ; the formation of the ear denotes the period which followed the appearance of the Master until your own age ; and the formation of the full corn in the ear, when it has arrived at maturity, and the sickle is brought, denotes the present and future era of Spiritism, which comes to prepare and to accomplish the regeneration of humanity by the New Revelation, and to fulfil the promises which Jesus made to men in his prophetic words.

Since the appearance of man upon your planet, the spirits of the Lord, by their occult influence in the errant state, and those, always superior to the masses, who were successively sent on missions, have aided in the progress of successive generations of men, according to the immutable will of God, and under the direction of the Master. They have laboured at the development of progress, and the germination and growth of the seed, which produced first the blade, and then the ear. They will now, according to the results already obtained and the degree of fertility and

warmth of the soil, labour at the formation of the corn, and at maturing the grain which is already formed, that it may be ready for the sickle when the time of harvest has come. As regards the grain which has already ripened since the diffusion of the New Revelation, they have already begun to use the sickle, because the time of harvest has come.

At the present day, the corn is formed, and the grain is ripening, and it is ripe already in a few chosen places. Thus the sickle has been used already. Try to understand our words. Spiritism has not existed many hours ; but has not the grain been formed already in many places ? Moreover, have not the beneficent rays of the sun of truth begun to bring many hearts to maturity, and have not its vivifying rays ripened some ears in a few chosen spots, which we have gathered with care ? The entire harvest is not ripe ; far from that ; but partial reapings can be made, and in the vast field which the Lord has entrusted to us, the most fertile and warmest soils are best suited to mature it.

The sun of truth gilds the ears which form, and the grains swell. Expose those ears on which we reckon to its rays, and let them ripen till the moment when the harvest is ready. Let them be penetrated by the fecundating fires shed upon them by the Lord ; and every ripened ear will be committed to the hands of the reapers. When the sheaves of chosen ears have been formed, we shall cast these fruitful seeds over your earth ; and then, animated by divine love, these seeds will yield abundant harvests, and will make the most barren soil productive ; only prepare the ears which must furnish the seed. The allegory is obvious, and easily understood ; these fruitful seeds are the purified spirits who will be sent on a mission to your earth to aid their incarnate brethren to advance morally and intellectually, and to fulfil their experiences in the path traced out by Jesus, and enlightened by the New Revelation. Go, children, purify and raise yourselves, and always bow your heads the lower before the divine Majesty the higher your hearts are raised towards him.

Yes, as Jesus said, when the corn has arrived at maturity,

the sickle is brought because the time of harvest has come. When you are ripe, we shall assemble you amongst us to give you your instructions under the direction of the Master, and according to the will of the Lord. You will go to aid in the maturity of the grain, and when the sickle is brought, and the harvest is finished, we shall prepare the seed for the following season, and thus the purification and renovation of the human race will be accomplished.

(Matth. xiii. 34, 35.)—What Jesus revealed to men, under the mystery and in the darkness of parable, concerning the life eternal, had not yet been spoken. The Hebrews had a vague idea of the immortality of the soul, and Christ came to give his disciples, as well as the rebellious Jews, a definite idea of that which was previously a shadow.

(Mark iv. 34, 35.)—Jesus explained to his disciples the sense in which they were to understand his words, but while he let them perceive their prophetic character, he only gave them what they were able to receive in the incarnate state, and what they needed for the accomplishment of their mission under the empire of the letter, veiling from them everything which required to remain secret, until men had become capable of receiving the New Revelation gradually, in proportion as they were able to bear it.

MATTHEW, CHAP. XIII.—VERSES 36-43.

Explanation of the Parable of the Darnel.

(36) Then Jesus having sent away the crowds, went into the house, and his disciples came to him, saying, Declare unto us the parable of the darnel in the field. (37) And he answered and said unto them, The sower of the good seed is the Son of Man. (38) The field is the world: the good seed represents the children of the kingdom, and the darnel represents the children of the wicked one, and the enemy who sowed them is the devil. (39) And the harvest is the consummation of the era; and the reapers are angels. (40) As therefore the darnel was collected, and burned in the fire, so shall it be in the consummation of this age. (41) The Son of Man shall send his angels, and shall gather out of his kingdom all them that offend, and those who work lawlessness. (42) And shall cast them into the furnace of fire; there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. (43) Then the just shall shine forth like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.

§ 167. The last words of Jesus show that the language used in the explanation of the parable was itself still veiled. They imply that it was necessary to free the spirit from the letter to arrive at the exact meaning of the terms employed to explain the parable, and the thoughts concealed under them, and to seek for the Spirit which quickeneth instead of the letter which killeth. They warned men to take care what meaning they attached to the explanation which was given them.

Men have understood and interpreted the words of Jesus literally, according to the prejudices and traditions of the age. They have falsified the interpretation of the words by materializing them, and have therefore falsified the sense also. The New Revelation which we bring you explains the full meaning of the Master in spirit and in truth.

(V. 37.)—Jesus, who is charged with the progress of your planet and its humanity (that is, the spirits who come to incarnate themselves upon it), has been sowing good seed ever since the appearance of man upon your earth, and has laboured and will labour at your progress, and will direct it by the spirits who aid him in his mission, until the spirits incarnated on your planet have attained the perfection required to raise them to the rank of pure spirits in the spiritual hierarchy.

He came to sow the good seed by his earthly mission, when he came to trace out the path of progress by his words, actions, teaching, and example; and to lay the foundations of human regeneration.

Jesus uses the expression "the Son of Man" in speaking of himself, to remind men of his apparently human earthly mission; and at the same time he demonstrates his power and sovereignty by the veiled explanation of the parable, appropriating his language to the intelligence and requirements of the age, and while serving the present by the letter, regarding the future by the spirit. He thus shows his power and sovereignty as sent by God, and as having been appointed by him the King of this planet, which he calls his "kingdom;" as having "the angels"

under his authority, and as possessing all power over your earth, which is his "kingdom," and over the successive generations of men who inhabit it. Before the "consummation of the age" he orders "his angels" to gather together the children of iniquity who are represented by the darnel, and to remove them out of his kingdom, the world, and cast them into "the furnace of fire," where there shall be "wailing and gnashing of teeth," whereas the children of the kingdom, who are represented by the good corn, and who have become just, shall remain in his kingdom, and shine there like the sun.

(V. 38.)—The world represented by the field is your planet and its humanity; the children of the kingdom represented by the good seed are those who strive after progress, and endeavour to attain it; and the children of iniquity represented by the darnel are those who abandon themselves to evil influences because their own instincts are evil.

(V. 39.)—The devil who sowed the darnel, and will yet continue to do so on your earth, and who is the "enemy," means all the evil spirits of error and deceit, impure, thoughtless, and perverse spirits, whether errant or incarnate, who endeavour to exert their evil influence on man to impede his progress by causing him to avoid the good, and to practise evil in thought, word, and deed; and thus to lead him away from the paths of the Lord which are fully traced out in the words of Jesus, when properly understood, and practised in their full principles and consequences, both from a material, moral, and intellectual point of view, in social, family, and private life; for his words include all the law and the prophets, and they run, "Love God above all things, and your neighbour as yourself; and always act in all things towards others as you would that they should act towards you."

"The consummation of the age" which is predicted, and which corresponds to the harvest, is not what human interpretations have represented. It has been represented as sudden, to human eyes, and has been misunderstood by

those who imagined that the whole universe would be transformed and renovated in an instant of time.

The end of the world has long been preparing, and is gradually being accomplished. You are advancing towards the period when the inferior spirits who incarnate themselves on your earth will be driven away by the mere influence of your presence, and will fly to surroundings which are better suited to them. You know that the inferior spirits dread the presence of elevated ones. Would not a vile and debauched man feel out of place and ill at ease among a company composed of the wisest and most virtuous men, and would he not return as soon as possible to those who were like himself? It will be thus with the inferior spirits, when the end of *your* world has come, in the sense that your own natures have become elevated and changed. As you ascend in the spiritual hierarchy, everything will change around you ; and when this takes place, the darnel will have been cast into the fire of purification, and the good corn will shine in the eyes of the Great Father.

At this period, when your progress will be sufficiently advanced to drive away the inferior spirits who surround you, you will enter into the spiritual state, in the sense that the matter, both of man and of the planet, will become purified, though without entering upon the purely fluidic state. Remember all the phases and degrees which separate spirits incarnated in a more or less material, or more or less fluidic manner on the various worlds in which they dwell. When you have arrived at the first spiritual phase, you will enter on your first separation from gross matter, among a class of spirits whose slight envelope differs entirely from yours, but is nevertheless not wholly fluidic. There is still a robe over the perisprit, as you understand it ; and you will yet have to change this robe many times before you are fitted to inhabit the fluidic worlds. You must not suppose that when you have attained to this degree of advancement, you will be confined to the earth on which you dwell. It will likewise have followed its progressive course ; but

you will then be at liberty to dwell on other worlds of equal elevation, without being restricted to one rather than another.

The consummation of the age, as typified by the harvest, is presented to you under three distinct periods. The first is that during which the inferior spirits are permitted to incarnate themselves on your earth, to purify themselves by expiations and reincarnations, and thus to become transformed from "children of iniquity" into "children of the kingdom."

The second period is that of the commencement of the separation of the darnel from the good corn, during which the guilty spirits who have remained wilfully blind and rebellious, will be removed from your planet, and relegated to the inferior planets.

The third period is that when the removal of these inferior spirits shall have effected the complete separation of the darnel from the good corn. Your earth will then become for the future a dwelling-place of peace and happiness for the good spirits who are prepared to enter on the spiritual phase which we have just explained to you, and to advance in the path of progress in knowledge, charity, and love, under the influence of the spirits of the Lord, and of those incarnated on a mission.

The reapers are all the spirits of the Lord, whomsoever they are, whether incarnated on a mission, or not, who labour at the progress, purification and regeneration of your humanity. It is obvious that those who labour at this work, are sent to the harvest.

(Verses 40-42.)—The kingdom of the Son of Man is your earth and its humanity, when they shall have reached the point of purity and progress when the guilty and inferior spirits, who have remained wilfully blind and rebellious, shall be removed and relegated to the inferior planets. The angels who will gather together and cast out of the kingdom all those who give offence and commit injustice, will be the pure and superior spirits, and not those incarnated on missions; for the separation and classification

of the spirits who have remained rebellious will be effected in the errant state. You must not forget that all the spirits who are working on your earth upon the regeneration of humanity, and are clothed with flesh like yourselves, are more or less fallible ; and are therefore on this account alone disqualified from passing judgment on a brother incarnate like themselves. They have no right to say to him, "Thou art guilty, and I am thy judge," or "Thou hast fallen, and I condemn or absolve thee." However purified a spirit clothed in a corporeal human envelope may be, he suffers the influence of that envelope to a greater or less extent ; and being therefore himself more or less fallible, he is forbidden to judge others. They are the pure and superior spirits free from all human contact, who will come to separate the good corn from the darnel. Therefore do you, labourers who likewise work in the field of the Lord, content yourselves with aiding the ripening of the corn with all your power. Expose it, as far as you possibly can, to the beneficent rays of the truth ; but do not judge your brethren. Never judge ; for you are far from being able to comprehend the secret views of the Lord, being blinded by your veil of flesh.

At the consummation of the age, when the gradual purification of your planet will be effected by the separation of the darnel from the good corn, the darnel will still be burned as in the past, but it will no longer be permitted to grow by the side of the good corn. The "children of iniquity" will still be subjected to expiation as in the past ; but they will no longer be permitted to incarnate themselves on your earth. The angels sent by Christ will remove them from your planet, and will relegate them to the inferior worlds, where they will class them according to their tendencies and guilt. Some will be sent to worlds inferior to the rank which yours will then occupy, and many others to worlds equal to your world at its present stage.*

There, in these inferior worlds, a long and painful expiation will burn up the evil plant, the darnel ; but the spirit is

* These words were medianimically dictated in February, 1863.

not like the darnel, which the fire reduces to ashes. It will be purified by this regenerative action, and it bears the germ of the good corn in itself. The consumed darnel gives birth to the fruitful seed, and harvests of good corn will spring from its ashes. The darnel will still be burned as often as necessary to change it into good corn, that the "children of iniquity" may become the "children of the kingdom," and thus, in their turn, the "just."

We again desire to impress upon you that wherever such expressions are used as "furnace of fire; Gehenna; fire of Gehenna; wailing, and gnashing of teeth," they invariably signify the expiation of the spirit, which is following by reincarnation and new experiences, and are always used in an emblematical sense.

(V. 43.)—These words are figurative. The light with which the children of the Lord shine is truth, faith, and love. The just are the children of the Lord; the purified spirits, whose perispit, moreover, has become more luminous from the effects of this purification, and radiates a light of purity and brightness corresponding to the degree of elevation which they have acquired. The kingdom of their Father denotes the superior worlds in space; and your planet will form a portion of it when it has attained the requisite degree of elevation; and will then become, to employ a human comparison, a province of the kingdom of God.

MATTHEW, CHAP. XIII.—VERSE 44.

The Hidden Treasure.

(44) Again, the kingdom of the heavens is like a treasure hidden in the field; which a man finding hideth, and from joy thereat goes away and selleth everything whatsoever that he hath, and buyeth that field.

§ 168. He who receives the word of God should experience the same delight (if one may compare such different feelings) as he who finds a treasure. He should cherish this source of eternal riches in his heart, and use every effort to prevent any of the vices of humanity from robbing him of it. He should cast aside his errors, his evil instincts and desires, and his vices; and in short everything which

sinks him to matter, as earthly wealth binds men to the soil to which they are attached ; and should make every sacrifice which humanity requires to preserve this spiritual treasure.

MATTHEW, CHAP. XIII.—VERSES 45, 46.

The Pearl of Great Price.

(45) Again, the kingdom of the heavens is like unto a merchant man, seeking fine pearls. (46) Who finding a costly pearl, goes away and bartereth everything whatsoever that he hath, and buyeth it.

§ 169. This parable has nearly the same signification as the last. It represents the man who seeks after truth sincerely, and when he has found it, accepts it, and rids himself without hesitation of his evil propensities and material appetites, which previously formed his false riches, and uses every effort to preserve the pearl of great price, which, like the treasure, is the truth which he found when he received the word of God.

MATTHEW, CHAP. XIII.—VERSES 47-52.

The Parable of the Fishing Net.

(47) Again, the kingdom of the heavens is like a drag-net cast into the sea, and it gathered up of all kinds. (48) When it was full, it was drawn up on the beach, and they sat down and gathered the good into vessels, and threw the worthless away. (49) So shall it be in the end of the age ; the angels shall bring out and separate the wicked from among the just. (50) And shall cast them into the furnace of fire ; there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. (51) Jesus says to them, Did you understand all these things ? They say to him, Yea, Lord. (52) And he said to them, Therefore every Scribe who is instructed in the kingdom of the heavens, is like a man who is an householder, and brings forth from his treasure things new and old.

§ 170. We need not explain the parable of the net. You will readily understand that it refers to the separation of the good from the bad, and is to be explained in precisely the same way as the parable of the darnel. You may notice that many parables have the same signification. They were spoken at different times and addressed to different men, but the object was the same.

Jesus asked his disciples if they had understood all these things, and they answered " Yes." They understood the

parable of the net, as far as it was given them to do so ; that is, as an image of the selection which would be gradually effected among spirits, that there might at length be no more rebellious spirits left to be removed.

(V. 52.)—Jesus means here by the word Scribe any man who is more enlightened than the masses, and is called upon to shed the light of his learning and intelligence among them. You know that the Scribes were the wise and learned men of that period. They diffused, or rather they ought to have diffused, light around them, but they more frequently hid their light under a bushel. He who brings forth from his treasure things new and old is he who avails himself of the knowledge which he has previously acquired to confirm and recommend what he desires to establish.

Thus you, Spiritists, ought, within the limits of your instruction and faculties, to turn over old chronicles, investigate libraries, and seek to discover old manuscripts which have been lost sight of in the secular libraries or the greedy convents which possess them ; and, strengthened by the old documents which you yourselves possess, establish the authenticity and antiquity of your science in the eyes of the timid, the incredulous, and the half-instructed.

MATTHEW, CHAP. XIII.—VERSES 53-58. MARK,
CHAP. VI.—VERSES 1-6.

A Prophet is not without Honour save in his own Country.

Matth. xiii. (53) And when Jesus had ended these parables, he departed thence. (54) And coming into his native country, he taught them in their synagogues, so that they were astonished, and said, Whence hath this man his wisdom and his mighty works ? (55) Is not this the carpenter's son ; is not his mother called Mary, and his brethren James and Joses and Simon and Judas ? (56) And his sisters, are they not all with us ? whence therefore hath this man all these things ? (57) And they were offended at him. But Jesus said to them, A prophet is not without honour, except in his native country, and in his own house. (58) And he did not perform many mighty works there, because of their unbelief.

Mark vi. (1) And he departed thence, and came into his native country, and his disciples followed him. (2) And upon the Sabbath, he began to preach in the synagogue, and many who heard were

amazed, and said, Whence hath this man these things? and what manner of power is given to him that even such mighty works are wrought by his hands? (3) Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, and the brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon? and are not his sisters here with us? And they were offended at him. (4) And Jesus said to them, A prophet is not without honour, except in his native country, and among his relations, and in his own house. (5) And he was unable to perform any miracle there, except that he laid his hands upon a few sick persons, and healed them. (6) And he wondered at their unbelief, and he went round the villages, teaching in the assembling-place.

§ 171. (Matth. xiii. 57; Mark vi. 4.)—Jesus desired to remind his hearers of the prophetic character and mission ascribed to him by others. They regarded him as one of themselves, and as limited to the same human powers and faculties; but they were, nevertheless, profoundly amazed at the wisdom contained in his doctrine, his sayings, and his teachings; and at the actions which he performed, which appeared to them to be miraculous. From the spiritual point of view, these words are a thoroughly philosophical reflection; and you have often had opportunities of verifying their accuracy.

(Matth. xiii. 58.)—Are you not aware that the opposition of spirits, whether incarnate or not, impedes the influence which you might otherwise exert? If Jesus had wished, he could have overcome this opposing influence; but to what purpose? To compel conviction in the wilfully blind, who would have persisted in closing their eyes, and would thus have deserved a severer punishment. The gentle Jesus never desired to drive a spirit to rebel, but to save him from the sufferings caused by evil-doing.

(Mark vi. 5.)—Jesus could perform no miracles simply because he would not exert his authority over the rebellious spirits. It was not the power, but the will which was wanting; though it appeared otherwise to men. Does it not often happen that you abstain from some action because there is an impediment in the way which you do not wish to overcome?

The versions of Mark and Matthew correspond, both expressing the same idea in approximate terms. Mark adds (v. 6) that Jesus was astonished at their unbelief.

This is a human idea, expressing the opinion of men who regarded the Master as only a man like themselves. Jesus could not be surprised at their unbelief when he read the thoughts of all, and beheld the instincts and tendencies of the multitude, and the spirits who were attracted by their evil instincts and tendencies, and acted on them by their free will.

MATTHEW, CHAP. XIV.—VERSES 1-12. MARK,
CHAP. VI.—VERSES 14-29. LUKE, CHAP. III.
VERSES 19, 20 ; IX.—7-9.

*Death of John the Baptist.—Hebrew Belief in
Reincarnation.*

Matth. xiv. (1) At that time Herod the tetrarch heard the report of Jesus, and said to his servants, (2) This is John the Baptist, who has risen from the dead, and therefore miracles are wrought by him. (3) For Herod had seized John, bound him, and cast him into prison, on account of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife. (4) For John said to him, It is not lawful for thee to have her. (5) And when he desired to kill him, he feared the multitude, because they considered him to be a prophet. (6) But when Herod's birthday was kept, the daughter of Herodias danced in the midst, and pleased Herod. (7) Wherefore he promised with an oath to give her whatever she should ask. (8) And she said, having been prompted by her mother, Give me here the head of John the Baptist on a dish. (9) And the king was grieved ; yet on account of his oaths, and of those reclining with him at table, he ordered it to be given her. (10) And he sent and beheaded John in the prison. (11) And his head was brought on a dish, and given to the little girl, and she took it to her mother. (12) And his disciples came and took up the body and buried it, and came and told Jesus.

Mark vi. (14) And king Herod heard of him, for his name was famous, and he said, John the Baptist has risen from the dead, and therefore miracles are wrought by him. (15) Others said, He is Elijah ; and others said, He is a prophet, or like one of the prophets. (16) But when Herod heard it, he said, This is John whom I have beheaded ; he is risen from the dead. (17) For Herod himself had sent and arrested John, and bound him in prison, on account of Herodias, the wife of his brother Philip, for he had married her. (18) For John said to Herod, It is not lawful for thee to have thy brother's wife. (19) And Herodias was angry with him, and wished to kill him, but she could not. (20) For Herod feared John, knowing that he was a just and pious man, and guarded him, and when he heard him, he did many things, and listened to him gladly. (21) And when it was a convenient day, when Herod made a dinner for his great men, captains, and the chief men of Galilee, (22) And the daughter of Herodias herself came in and danced, and pleased Herod, and those who were sitting with him, and the king said to the little girl, (23) Ask of me whatever thou wilt, unto the half of my kingdom. (24) And she went out, and said to her mother, What shall

I ask? And she said, The head of John the Baptist. (25) And going in directly with haste to the king, she asked, saying, I wish you to give me immediately the head of John the Baptist on a dish. (26) And the king was much grieved, but on account of the oaths and the company, would not refuse her. (27) And the king immediately sent a guard-man, and commanded his head to be brought. (28) And he went out and beheaded John in prison, and brought the head on a dish, and gave it to the little girl, and the little girl gave it to her mother. (29) And when his disciples heard it, they came and took up his body, and laid it in the tomb.

Luke iii. (19) And Herod the tetrarch being reproved by him on account of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, and the many crimes which he had committed, (20) Herod added this above all the rest, and shut up John in prison.

Luke ix. (7) And Herod the tetrarch heard of all that happened with him, and he was perplexed, for some said, John has risen from the dead; (8) Some said, Elijah has appeared, and others, A prophet of the ancients has risen again. (9) And Herod said, I have beheaded John, but who is this of whom I hear such things? And he desired to see him.

§ 172. The rumours concerning Jesus, and Herod's remarks, confirm the existence of the popular belief in reincarnation among the Hebrews. Men could only suppose Jesus to be Elijah, John the Baptist, or one of the old prophets, by the reincarnation of the soul or spirit in a new body, as the son of Joseph and Mary, who were regarded as his father and mother. Do not wonder at the different expressions used by Herod. He heard of Jesus more than once, and the words recorded by Luke were spoken first. Those recorded by Matthew and Mark were spoken at a later time, and under different circumstances.

Concerning the death of John the Baptist, we need only remark that the narratives of Matthew and Mark explain and complete each other. The daughter of Herodias did not know beforehand the effect which her dancing would produce on the king, and the offer which he would make her. It was only afterwards that she went out to consult her mother, and then returned to Herod, with her demand for the head of John the Baptist.

We have only given this explanation to prevent your troubling yourselves about any apparent contradiction between the two records; but you should never stop at such unimportant details. What does it matter to the faith which you profess whether Herodias asked for the head of John the Baptist before or after the dance, or the king's offer?

Herodias and her daughter had both selected a formidable temptation, and the circumstances under which it was to be accomplished. The task was beyond their strength, and they sank under it in consequence. Do you not understand that the Lord knows beforehand who will fail? His wisdom foresees the weakness of the spirit, and the snares into which its weakness may lead it in the exercise of its free will. If one of your children persists in asking you to let him attempt a task beyond his strength, do you not foresee that his strength and perseverance will be insufficient? If you consent to his making the effort, is it not simply to teach him to estimate his own abilities more correctly?

As Herodias and her daughter failed in these temptations, it was needful for them to seek means of purification and progress by expiation and fresh experiences.

MATTHEW, CHAP. XIV.—VERSES 13–22. MARK,
CHAP. VI.—VERSES 30–45. LUKE, CHAP. IX.
VERSES 10–17.

Multiplication of the Loaves and Fishes.

Matth. xiv. (13) And when Jesus heard it, he departed thence in a boat into a desert place privately, and the multitudes having heard it, followed him from the cities on foot. (14) And Jesus coming out saw a large crowd, and had compassion on them, and healed their sick. (15) And when it grew late his disciples came to him, saying, This is a desert place, and the time is already past; send away the multitudes, that they may go into the villages and buy food for themselves. (16) And Jesus said to them, They have no occasion to go away, do you give them to eat. (17) And they said to him, We have nothing here but five loaves and two fishes. (18) And he said, Bring them here to me. (19) And having ordered the crowds to sit down on the grass, and taking the five loaves and two fishes, he looked up to heaven and gave thanks, and having broken the loaves he gave them to the disciples, and the disciples to the crowds. (20) And they all ate and were satisfied, and they took up the remainder of the fragments, twelve basketsful. (21) And they who had eaten were about 5,000 men, besides women and children. (22) And Jesus immediately constrained his disciples to embark in the boat, and to go before him to the other side, until he should send away the crowds.

Mark vi. (30) And the Apostles came to Jesus and related to him all things which they had done and taught. (31) And he said to them, Come ye yourselves privately unto a desert place and rest a little; for there were many coming and going, and they had no opportunity to eat. (32) And they went away privately in the boat into a desert place.

(33) And the crowds saw them departing, and many knew him, and they ran together on foot from all the cities, and went before them and met him. (34) And Jesus saw a large crowd, and had compassion on them, for they were like sheep having no shepherd, and he began to teach them many things. (35) And when much time had already past, his disciples came to him, and said, This is a desert place, and it is already late, (36) Send them away, that they may go into the surrounding fields and villages, for they have nothing to eat. (37) And he answered and said to them, Do you give them to eat. And they say to him, Shall we go away and buy bread for two hundred denarii, and give them to eat? (38) And he says to them, How many loaves have you? go and see. And when they knew, they say, Five, and two fishes. (39) And he ordered them all to sit down in companies on the green grass. (40) And they lay down in companies, by hundreds and by fifties. (41) And taking the five loaves and the two fishes, he looked up to heaven and gave thanks, and he broke the loaves, and gave to his disciples to set before them, and he divided the two fishes among all. (42) And they all ate and were satisfied. (43) And they took up twelve basketsful of the fragments, and of the fishes. (44) And they who ate the loaves were about 5,000 men. (45) And immediately he constrained his disciples to embark in the boat and to go before him to Bethsaida on the other side, while he should send away the crowd.

Luke ix. (10) And the Apostles having returned, related to him what great things they had performed, and taking them with him, he withdrew privately into a desert place belonging to the city called Bethsaida. (11) And when the crowds knew it they followed him, and having received them, he spoke to them about the kingdom of God, and healed those who had need of healing. (12) And the day began to decline, and the twelve came and said to him, Send away the crowd, that they may go and disperse themselves in the surrounding fields and villages, and find provisions, for we are here in a desert place. (13) And he saith to them, Give ye them to eat. And they said, We have nothing with us but five loaves and two fishes, unless we should go and buy food for all this people. (14) For they were about 5,000 men. And he said to his disciples, Make them sit down in companies of fifty each. (15) And they did so, and made them all sit down. (16) And taking the five loaves and two fishes, he looked up to heaven, gave thanks, and broke them and gave to his disciples to distribute to the crowd. (17) And they ate and were all satisfied, and they took up twelve basketsful of fragments that remained.

§ 173. We have already spoken of the power which Jesus possessed of attracting to himself the fluids which he needed. By exerting his powerful will over the spirits who were eager to obey him, he could have multiplied the small quantity of food which his disciples possessed to any extent. This food having been prepared by appropriate accessory fluids which gave them the nutritive properties required, answered the needs of matter, and a very small quantity satisfied the most craving appetite.

Would it not have been enough for Christ to will that the

multitude should be satisfied? It would only have been necessary for him to have gathered round them the needful fluids, which would have satisfied their hunger when breathed. But material eyes required a physical effect, and this multiplication was more striking than if the same result had been attained by invisible means. It seemed to the Apostles, the disciples, and the multitude, that all were fed with the five loaves and two fishes which Jesus took, and that the fragments which he broke in his hands multiplied themselves infinitely. He gave these to the disciples, who took them and distributed them to the people; and after all had eaten, twelve basketsful of fragments remained. This was what all had seen with their own eyes, and could bear witness to, for they had all partaken of the fragments of the five loaves and two fishes. The Apostles and disciples, as well as the multitude, were all alike ignorant of the hidden causes of the multiplication of the loaves and fishes. This incomprehensible event was called a miracle, and is still regarded as such by those who are ignorant of the New Revelation, which initiates you into the secrets of the other world.

Some simple-hearted and humble-minded men have believed it to be a real fact (though without understanding it) on the faith of the Gospel narrative, based on the testimony of the eye-witnesses; but the majority have either pretended to believe it because they did not dare to deny it, or have openly denied or rejected it, because they could not comprehend it, and knew not how to explain it. Do you see anything of what is always passing around you in the spiritual world? As the Evangelists were just as ignorant as others of the causes of the event, they confined themselves under medianimic influence to relating the fact itself. The narrative implies that Jesus gave the fragments to his disciples, who put them into baskets to carry them, and to distribute them to the people. There were some women in the crowd who were provided with those baskets, which they carry on their heads in the East, and which serve equally well to carry fruits and vegetables, and to protect them from the heat

of the sun. When the multiplication of the loaves and fishes began, Jesus ordered the disciples to collect the baskets and bring them to him. The multiplication was accomplished in the following manner:—Jesus availed himself of the fluids he attracted to multiply the food in his hands, by rendering these fluids visible and tangible, with the appearance, form, smell, and taste of pieces of loaves and fishes. Otherwise the five loaves and two fishes would never have provided enough fragments, however small, to be divided among so large a company. When the disciples laid the fluidic products in the baskets, in the shape of loaves and fishes, these fragments were immediately surrounded by substances made by the spirits, and then rendered visible and tangible. The spirits prepared these substances in the same manner as those which Jesus gave to his disciples, and laid them, still invisible, in the empty baskets. They rendered them visible and tangible when the disciples put in the fragments which they had received from Jesus. The multiplication was thus effected in such a manner that the fragments which Jesus broke appeared to human eyes to multiply themselves in the act; and after leaving his hands, to multiply indefinitely in the baskets.

If Jesus had desired, he could have produced the result alone, but the means employed were more convenient. Was it not easier for the spirits around Jesus to lay the provisions which they had prepared invisibly, in the empty baskets, and to make them visible as soon as the disciples had put in the products that they received from Jesus, than for him to pass the whole contents of the baskets from his hands into those of the disciples? As these fluidic products were shaped like pieces of bread and fish, they were eaten as such. There is nothing surprising in this. Have you not seen a mesmeric somnambulist take the water or the wine which was given him for something totally different? Are you not aware of the great power of spiritual influence on man; and do you not understand how great must have been that which Jesus and the innumerable company of spirits around him could exercise over these men?

You are not told what became of the twelve baskets, or whether the fragments which were left over were preserved. All that it is important to know is, that the work which Jesus accomplished really took place ; the details are of no consequence. You can understand that there was some confusion among so large a crowd, and when the Apostles went to the boat by the directions of Jesus, they put down the baskets which they had been using, and left them behind. They thought more of their spiritual necessities than of their bodily needs, which were satisfied for the moment, and they did not trouble about the rest. The secret influence acting upon them was enough to direct their attention to points that might interest them, when it was necessary to divert them to another object ; and when Jesus ordered them to cross over before him, he prepared for a new act which he desired to accomplish. As the crowd retired in some disorder, the baskets in their way were picked up empty by some, and trampled upon by others who thought neither of the baskets nor of their contents. The fluidic products then lost their tangibility by spirit action, returned to their source, and everything went on as usual.

Everything was foreseen and provided for in the accomplishment of the works of the Master. As regards the Gospel narrative, take notice that it reproduces the impressions and explanations of men, in this instance, as in all others, under medianimic influence ; and observe also that Jesus designed to make a strong impression upon his disciples and the multitude, so that although they believed his humanity to be the same as their own, they were profoundly impressed by his words and actions.

MATTHEW, CHAP. XIV.—VERSES 23-33. MARK,
CHAP. VI.—VERSES 46-52.

Jesus and Peter walking on the Lake.

Matth. xiv. (23) And having sent away the multitudes, he went up into the mountain privately to pray, and when it was evening he was

there alone. (24) And the boat was already in the middle of the lake, tossed about by the waves ; for the wind was contrary. (25) And in the fourth watch of the night, Jesus came to them walking on the lake. (26) And the disciples seeing him walking on the lake, were frightened, and said, It is a phantom ; and they cried out with fear. (27) And immediately Jesus called to them, saying, It is I, be not afraid. (28) And Peter answered and said to him, Lord, if it be thou, command me to come to thee upon the water. (29) And he said, Come. And Peter, descending from the ship, walked on the water to come to Jesus. (30) But seeing the wind strong, he was frightened, and beginning to sink, he cried out, saying, Lord save me. (31) And immediately Jesus stretched out his hand and lifted him up, and says to him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt ? (32) And when they had entered the boat the wind abated. (33) And those in the boat came and did homage to him, saying, Truly thou art Son of God.

Mark vi. (46) And having taken leave of them, he went up into the mountain to pray. (47) And when it was evening, the boat was in the middle of the lake, and he was alone on land. (48) And he saw them distressed with rowing, for the wind was against them, and about the fourth watch of the night he cometh to them, walking upon the lake, and would have passed by them. (49) And when they saw him walking on the lake, they thought it was a phantom, and cried out. (50) For they all saw him, and were frightened. And immediately he talked with them, and saith to them, Be of good cheer, it is I, be not afraid. (51) And he went up to them in the boat, and the wind fell, and they were immeasurably astounded in themselves. (52) For they did not consider about the loaves, for their heart was hardened.

§ 174. You can understand how Jesus walked on the water. As the spirit can traverse the air, so could Jesus cause his tangible perispirt to lose its material properties at pleasure, and return to the spiritual conditions of our existence. At the time when Jesus came to his disciples walking on the lake, he had returned to the perispirtic condition of apparitions, and his body, though apparently human, and always visible and tangible, was, when he took Peter's hand, of less specific gravity than the waves.

You are told that his disciples believed that they saw a phantom. When Jesus came towards them walking on the lake, they did not know if what they saw was really their Master, or only an apparition. Some have witnessed similar apparitions, for the invisible world has been in communication with humanity in all ages ; and as men did not know the causes of these phenomena, they were regarded even at that age, either as freaks of the imagination, or as the work of evil spirits, or as a special favour granted by the Lord to one of his incarnate creatures. These apparitions gave rise to the multitudes of gods and goddesses worshipped

by the idolators whose credulity was imposed upon by ambition or cupidity.

There were seeing mediums among the Jews also, who sometimes asserted that they had seen the apparition of some friend or relation, or even some of their patriarchs or prophets, for you are aware that spirits can assume all forms. Hence Peter, who was a very highly developed clairvoyant, clairaudient and physical medium, was unable to recognize Jesus, and took him for a phantom. He saw that he presented the same unsubstantial appearance as the apparitions that he had seen already; and it was only when Jesus stretched out his hand to him that he understood that it was really himself, as he had never seen a tangible apparition before.

As Peter's faith led him to obey Jesus, he was, by the mental command of the Master, upheld by spirits appointed for the purpose, and afterwards released, in such a manner that he began to sink the moment his doubts returned. Jesus might have left the whole charge of upholding him to the attendant spirits; but he took him by the hand not only to convince him that it was he himself, but to teach him that he was upheld by his power; for it is obvious that unless Jesus had desired it, the spirits would not have given Peter their aid.

Peter was a powerful physical medium, and it was by means of the fluids connected with his organism that the attendant spirits sustained him, and that he was thus enabled to walk on the lake. His mediumship enabled him at a later period to free himself from the chains with which he was bound,* by the power of the attendant spirits, as we will explain to you at a fitting time. Even if Peter had not been a physical medium, he would have been upheld by the surrounding spirits, who would then have gathered around him the necessary fluids which the powerful will of the Master had attracted. When Jesus and Peter had entered the boat, the wind ceased in consequence of the mental command which Jesus gave to the spirits in charge of the

* Acts vi. 6, 7.

winds and waves. You may refer to the explanations which we have given (vol. i. § 118, pp. 274 and 275), relating to the tempest which arose on the lake, and was then calmed.

(Matth. xiv. 33.)—These events appeared so surprising to those who witnessed them, that they thought they could only proceed from the direct action of God himself. As Jesus was the intermediate agent concerned in them, the title of Son of God immediately occurred to his disciples. As they did not understand the general sense in which Jesus often used the words "My Father" in speaking of the Universal Creator, they immediately gave them a special sense, and regarded Jesus as a personification of the Divinity. They consequently worshipped him, and this gave rise to the deeply-rooted but erroneous idea that God wishing to save humanity, and to redeem it from its faults was himself offered to himself as a propitiatory sacrifice. But this error was useful for the present, and paved the way for the future explanations of the New Revelation. Man is always conceited about his personal importance, and considered himself of such consequence in the eyes of the Creator, that, in order to redeem his faults, it was necessary that God, who could as he imagined hurl all the globes scattered through space into complete chaos by a simple effort of his will, should effect his redemption by sacrificing himself to himself. For this purpose he stooped himself to the level of his unworthy creatures, so that the victim sacrificed should be sufficiently worthy of those who were to be redeemed. O pride of man, who always believes himself to be the king of Creation, when he is, as it were, only a miserable ephemeral insect, as unimportant comparatively as the gnat which sports in the sunbeam! But the New Revelation comes to raise the veil which hid light and truth from your eyes, to teach you "who is the Son," and to make you understand the aim and object of the earthly mission of Jesus, and to what extent he is the representative of the Father as respects your planet and its humanity, as being your Protector, and your Lord and Master.

You are told that the amazement of the disciples on seeing Jesus walk on the lake was much increased when the wind fell as soon as he entered the boat, for they did not consider the multiplication of the loaves because their hearts were hardened ; which signifies because they did not try to understand. As their eyes were still veiled, it appeared to them that the loaves multiplied of themselves, without their being able to see how, and without their even trying to understand it. Do you not sometimes witness events which apparently transcend the usual laws of humanity, without understanding them, or even making the slightest attempt to do so ?

When Jesus walked on the water and Peter attempted it, the event appeared most astonishing to the human understanding of the disciples, because they more easily realized the impossibility of any creature converting the moving surface of the lake into a substance capable of bearing the weight of a man ; and, as everything combined to open their eyes, they realized the two events which they had witnessed during the day. They did not understand their causes ; for it was reserved for the New Revelation to teach these to men. But they understood that they could only proceed from a power so far above that of men that only God could effect them, and they consequently regarded them as miracles produced by God himself. Their astonishment did not arise from their not having comprehended the material fact of the multiplication of the loaves, but because they would not have been surprised if they had understood that this was the work of God himself, as they did afterwards, and should have perceived at the time.

MATTHEW, CHAP. XIV.—VERSES 34-36.

MARK, CHAP. VI.—VERSES 53-56.

Touching the Dress of Jesus.

Matth. xiv. (34) And having crossed over, they came to the land of Gennesaret, (35) And the men of that place having recognized him, sent into all the surrounding country, and brought to him all who were ill, (36) And besought him that they might only touch the hem of his garment ; and as many as touched him were completely cured.

Mark vi. (53) And having crossed over, they came to the land of Gennesaret, and anchored there, (54) And when they came out of the boat, immediately they recognized him, (55) And running into all the surrounding country, they began to carry about those who were ill in their beds, when they heard that he was there. (56) And wherever he went into the villages, or towns, or fields, they laid the sick in the public places, and besought him that they might only touch the hem of his garment. And as many as touched him were healed.

§ 175. We have already explained the magnetic power which Jesus shed around him. The touching of his garments was called miraculous from ignorance of the real nature of the effects, but was a material agency required by man. The sick people were not cured by the mere fact of their touching the Master's garment, but by the effect of his powerful will, and by magnetic action, which directed the appropriate fluids throughout their diseased frames.

MATTHEW, CHAP. XV.—VERSES 1-20. MARK,
CHAP. VII.—VERSES 1-23.

Unwashed Hands.—Real Impurity.

Matth. xv. (1) Then the Scribes and Pharisees came to Jesus from Jerusalem, saying, (2) Why do thy disciples transgress the tradition of the elders, for they do not wash their hands when they eat bread? (3) And he answered and said to them, Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God through your tradition? (4) For God commanded, saying, Honour thy father and thy mother, and he who reviles his father or mother, let him be put to death. (5) But you say, Whoever shall say to his father or his mother, Whatever you may profit by me is a gift; and then he will not honour his father or his mother. (6) And you have abrogated the commandment of God through your tradition. (7) Ye hypocrites! well did Isaiah prophesy about you, saying, (8) This people draw near to me with their mouth, and honour me with their lips, but their heart keeps far from me. (9) And they reverence me falsely, teaching doctrines which are the commandments of men. (10) Having called the multitude to him, he says to them, Hear and understand. (11) It is not that which cometh into the mouth which defileth a man, but that which cometh from the mouth, this defileth the man. (12) Then his disciples came and said to him, Do you know that the Pharisees were offended when they heard the discourse? (13) And he answered and said, Every thing planted which my heavenly Father hath not planted shall be rooted out. (14) Let them alone; they are blind leaders of the blind: and if the blind lead the blind, they shall both fall into the pit. (15) And Peter answered and said to him, Explain this parable to us. (16) And Jesus said, Are you also still without understanding? (17) Do you not yet perceive that every thing which entereth into the mouth goes into the stomach, and is cast out into the draught? (18) But that which goeth out of the mouth cometh forth from the heart, and these things defile the man. (19) For out of the

heart proceed evil deliberations, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witnessings, and blasphemies. (20) These are the things which defile the man ; but it does not defile the man to eat with unwashed hands.

Mark vii. (1) And the Pharisees and certain of the Scribes who came from Jerusalem gathered round him. (2) And seeing some of his disciples eating bread with dirty, that is, with unwashed, hands, they found fault. (3) For the Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they wash their hands up to the elbow, obeying the tradition of the elders. (4) And they do not eat after market without bathing, and there are many other things which they make a point of obeying, such as washing drinking cups, and pint measures, and copper vessels, and couches. (5) Then the Pharisees and Scribes asked him, Why do your disciples not walk according to the tradition of the elders? (6) And he answered and said to them, Well did Isaiah prophesy about you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoureth me with their lips, but their hearts hold far aloof from me. (7) And they honour me idly, teaching doctrines which are but the commandments of men. (8) For setting aside the law of God, you enforce the traditions of men concerning the washing of pint measures and drinking cups, and you do many other things of the same sort. (9) And he said to them, You wholly disregard the commandment of God that you may observe your traditions. (10) For Moses said, Honour thy father and thy mother, and whosoever reviles father or mother, let him be put to death. (11) But you say, If a man should say to his father or his mother, That which you might benefit by me is Korban (a gift). (12) And ye suffer him no longer to do anything for his father or mother. (13) Setting aside the Word of God by the tradition which ye have handed down, and you do many other like things. (14) And calling to him all the multitude, he said to them, Listen to me, all of you, and understand. (15) Nothing of that which is outside a man, and which enters into him, can defile him, but those things which proceed from him, these are those which defile the man. (16) He that hath ears to hear let him hear. (17) And when they left the multitude and went into the house, his disciples questioned him about the parable. (18) And he says to them, Are you also void of understanding? Do you not know that nothing that enters into a man from outside can defile him? (19) For it does not go into his heart, but into the stomach, and goeth out in the draught, cleansing all foods. (20) And he said, That which cometh out of the man, that defiles the man. (21) For from within, from the heart of man, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts; (22) Covetousness, knaveries, treachery, intemperance, the evil eye, blasphemy, arrogance, folly, (23) All those evil things come from within, and defile a man.

§ 176. We tell you, like Jesus, to despise traditions, for the words spoken by the Just One to the Pharisees are still applicable to your own times. Despise traditions, for they have corrupted the law of love and pardon, the forgetfulness of offences, and the mutual concord which Jesus preached to you. Tradition has corrupted his mild law, as it previously corrupted the law of Moses. Cast it aside, and return to the simple Christianity of Christ. Follow his

fraternal counsels, walk in the path which he has marked out for you, and allow the proud Pharisees of your own days to take offence. They speak and act towards Spiritists as the ancient Pharisees spoke and acted with regard to Jesus. Let them take offence, for they also will be compelled to abandon their traditions, and to return to the law which is the source of all virtues. Guard yourselves from everything which could defile you, and pronounce no word, nor commit any act which your conscience condemns ever so slightly. Do not give way to any evil thought, but march onwards with simplicity, dispensing good things from the good treasure of your heart, that this treasure may be shared among your brethren, and may cause abundance to spring up everywhere in virtue and peace in their hearts.

The Hebrews might set aside a certain portion of their goods for religious purposes by a vow, or as an offering; and by pretending that this portion was all that they could spare for their parents' benefit, they absolved themselves from aiding them. The gift thus made to the Lord was supposed to profit the father or mother in celestial blessings. It was thus that hypocrisy and impiety profaned the Divinity, and disgraced the unworthy priest who suffered and encouraged such a profanation. It was this example which Jesus selected to lead the Scribes and Pharisees to reflect on what they called the tradition of the elders, and to reject everything in the tradition which was contrary to the divine law, as it had been revealed by the Lord through Moses and the Prophets. He also wished to silence the Scribes and Pharisees before he addressed the multitude.

The traditions of the elders were customs added to the real laws. You may understand by customs all doctrines, ordinances, and precepts, proceeding from men and enacted by them. By real laws you may understand the divine laws revealed to the Hebrews, either by a spirit-manifestation to Moses on Mount Sinai,* or through his inspired or clair-

* For further explanations, compare the section on the Ten Commandments at the end of the book.

audient mediumship. You also, Christians, have your traditions of the elders in man-made doctrines, ordinances, and precepts, which have added to, and therefore changed, misrepresented, and falsified the divine law which was revealed by Jesus during his mission. The divine law is wholly and exclusively comprised in the words of the Master which were veiled by the letter when necessary, to form the basis of the New Revelation.

Just as Jesus came to destroy the tradition of the elders among the Hebrews, and thus to root out every plant which his Heavenly Father had not planted, even so, the New Revelation of your own days has come to destroy every tradition of the elders among you, through the spirits of the Lord who are his messengers. The words spoken by Jesus to the Scribes and Pharisees of that period are likewise applicable to those of your own days, who also keep up the tradition of the elders, and honour God with their lips, but honour him in vain, because they teach the doctrines and commandments of men. Can God recognize outward purity when the heart is impure? Can God accept the worship of the lips when the heart is cold? Can God bless and pardon man when he curses and revenges himself? O, men, honour God from the bottom of your hearts, and follow with simplicity the law of love which he imposes on you. Be not whitened sepulchres outwardly, but let purity reside in your heart, whatever may be the external covering.

(Matth. xv. 13.)—In thus answering the disciples who told him that the Pharisees were offended at his sayings, the thought of Jesus included the present and the future. As regards the present, he alluded to the doctrines and commandments of men which had arisen during the Hebrew period, and which had corrupted and perverted the divine law revealed to the Hebrews through Moses, which showed them the path of morality, duty, and progress by the Decalogue, and by the law of the love of God and of the neighbour. As regards the future, Jesus foresaw the phases and conditions of human progress, and alluded to the doctrines and commandments of men which would arise, and change

corrupt and falsify the law of love, and the sublime morality contained in his teaching and example, and summed up in the two commandments which he extended from the narrow limits of a nationality, to all the men of your planet, and which he declared to include all the Law and the Prophets.

He also alluded to doctrines and commandments which would corrupt and falsify the purely spiritual worship which he instituted upon earth ; the inner worship of the soul by a pure heart, a good conscience and good works, under the one divine symbol of justice, love and charity, thus leading to fraternity, and through fraternity, to liberty and equality before God and man ; and unity, and human brotherhood for all and between all, whether Jews or Gentiles. He alluded to doctrines and commandments arising from human interpretations which he knew would corrupt and falsify the revelation regarding his spiritual origin, which was veiled by the letter ; and likewise the words which he spoke, and which would give rise to material and penitential practices, and to dogmas and commandments originating with, and instituted by men. These are plants which the Heavenly Father has not planted, and which shall be rooted up.

Do not find fault, for thus it was to be under the influence of the free-will of men, amid the efforts of thought according to the prejudices, traditions, intelligence, and phases of progress in succeeding ages. Just as the Hebrew era prepared for the advent of the Christian era, so under the empire and the veil of the letter, the Christian era has prepared for the advent of the new era of the Christianity of Christ, the spiritual era ; and for the reign of the Spirit, which is still future as regards yourselves, but which will commence with the New Revelation.

Yes, every plant which the heavenly Father has not planted shall be rooted up. You are forewarned by the Master that whatever offence may be given to the Pharisees of your own time, everything which does not proceed from the pure source will be rejected, in order that man may begin his course anew, guided by faith, hope, and love. And we say, like Jesus, and in his name, "Let those hear

who have ears to hear," for the time is come when the words "the letter killeth but the spirit quickeneth" shall be fulfilled.

The Spirit of Truth comes to commence and carry on this work of light, progress, and regeneration. He comes to destroy human doctrines and commandments, to recall men to the Christianity of Christ, to remind them of what Jesus said by explaining and developing his words in spirit and in truth, and to teach them progressively all truth, so far and in proportion as they are able to bear it. He comes to lead men to unity of belief, and the time is not far distant when different opinions must unite in one single and only truth: God is One, single and indivisible, the uncreated Creator of everything which exists; Jesus is a pure and perfect spirit, the protector and ruler of your planet and its humanity; and the spirits of the Lord are purified spirits subject to the gentle and much-loved power of our Head, receiving from him the orders of our Common Father, and acting as instruments devoted to your regeneration and happiness. These are designated under the veil of the letter, by the terms used in the Gospel: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

The Spirit of Truth comes to lead men back to the understanding and practice of the divine law which Jesus has revealed to them, according to the Spirit. He comes to lead men to practise justice, love, charity, and fraternity, and consequently liberty of thought and action, the source and means of all progress. He comes to lead them to practise equality before God and man, under the reciprocal and brotherly influence of tolerance, simplicity of heart, humility of mind, disinterestedness, self-renunciation (virtues and duties implying the predominance of spirit over matter), and kindness and benevolence towards all and among all; severity towards one's self, and indulgence towards others. The Spirit of Truth comes to lead men to the time when they shall no longer worship the Father on the mountain, nor in Jerusalem, but shall become more and more the worshippers desired by the Father, the true worshippers of

the Father in spirit and in truth, apart from all the external religions which still divide and separate them.

(Matth. xv. 14.)—These words of the Master apply to the Pharisees of your own days. Those who persist in walking in darkness and lead their brethren into it will suffer the same penalty until their eyes are opened, but the expiation will be longer and more painful, for those who have persisted in making themselves leaders of the blind, than for the blind whom they have led with them into the same pit. Let those hear who have ears to hear.

(Matth. xv. 11, 17-20; Mark vii. 14, 15, 18-23.)—By the teaching contained in these words, Jesus wished to make the Apostles, and through them all men, fully understand that all commandments relative to the nature of food, and to such material practices as fasting, or bodily privations which are useless and unprofitable to the neighbour, are vain and useless before God. He wished it to be fully understood that there is only one fast which is acceptable to God; moral and spiritual fasting, which consists in abstaining from everything which is evil, or contrary in thought, word, or deed to the divine law of justice, love, charity, and fraternity, which is revealed in the Gospels.

Do not be surprised that the reputed successors of the Apostles who are declared to be their heirs and consequently infallible, should walk in the steps of the Scribes and Pharisees, as regards human commandments and material practices; and that eighteen centuries after Jesus replied to Peter, we are obliged to repeat in the name of Christ and of the Spirit of Truth, "Are you still void of understanding?"

The Church which men made was human, and has acted humanly, forcing those who might oppose her to submit to her yoke; ruling over matter by material laws, and thinking little of developing the intelligence which might one day have led her to perceive that she had gone astray. The Church is not to blame for having made use of her material power at a time when men needed a curb, and when she alone was in a position to impose it upon them, but wherein lies her fault? In her inertia, and in her

stationary and even retrograde spirit. The ages advance, each bringing its share of civilization, progress, and light, but the Church alone wishes to keep the veil over the intelligence of man, she alone desires to keep up infancy, when full age is struggling to escape the trammels which she imposes on it. She has done well ! man will use his intelligence in spite of her. How many who have been driven to repudiate her by the intelligence which she did not wish for, finding her too old to answer the aspirations of their hearts ! Some have fallen back upon nothingness, and others have waited, not knowing whether to deny or to believe ; but at length the hour of deliverance approaches, the bonds are about to fall off, and the enlightened and regenerated human spirit will forget all the vain toys of the Church, to arm itself openly with the arms of Christ.

MATTHEW, CHAP. XV.—VERSES 21–28. MARK,
CHAP. VII.—VERSES 24–30.

The Canaanitish Woman.

Matth. xv. (21) And Jesus coming out thence, withdrew into the districts of Tyre and Sidon. (22) And behold a Canaanitish woman, coming from those districts, cried to him, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, Son of David ! My daughter is badly possessed, (23) And he did not answer her a word, and his disciples came and spoke to him, saying, Send her away, for she cries after us. (24) And he answered and said, I am not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. (25) And she came and did homage to him, saying, Lord help me. (26) And he answered and said, It is not good to take the children's bread and cast it to the little dogs. (27) And she said, Yea, Lord, for the little dogs also eat of the crumbs of bread which fall from the table of their masters. (28) Then Jesus answered and said to her, O, woman, great is thy faith, be it unto thee as thou wilt. And her daughter was healed from that hour.

Mark vii. (24) And he arose and went forth thence into the borders of Tyre and Sidon. He entered into the house, desiring that no one should know, but he could not be hidden. (25) For a woman heard of him whose little daughter had an unpurified spirit ; and she came and cast herself at his feet, (26) And the woman was a Greek, a Syro-Phœnician by birth, and she asked him to cast the demon out from her daughter. (27) And Jesus said to her, Let the children first be satisfied, for it is not fitting to take the children's bread and cast it to the little dogs. (28) And she answered, Yea, Lord, for the little dogs also eat of the children's crumbs under the table. (29) And he said to her, On account of this saying, go thy way, the demon has gone out of thy daughter. (30) And going away to her house, she found the demon gone out, and her daughter thrown upon the bed.

§ 177. You have here an illustration of the course of Christianity, and of Spiritism which comes to finish the work. This woman who did not belong to the Jewish nation was by no means seriously repulsed by him who was all love and charity, but she was destined to serve as an example to men by showing them that however far they might be removed from Christian beliefs, the miracle that they hoped for might be wrought by faith in God. What brought this woman there, if it were not her confidence in the divine mission of Jesus? What inspired her answer if it were not a lively faith and unbounded confidence?

Yes, you may all be like the Canaanitish woman. You may all without exception obtain what you desire through the strength and tenacity of your faith, for it is not sufficient to raise your heart towards God, and then allow yourself to be depressed and discouraged if you do not instantly obtain what you ask. It is needful to persevere in faith, and to understand, that the desired miracle may be effected out of your sight, and to wait patiently till the return to the house. That is (to speak plainly to all intelligences), whatever you ask with faith and perseverance will always be granted; but not always under such conditions that your gross senses can instantly perceive them. The human mercy which you ask, will often only bear fruit in eternity; but it will bear fruit, you may rely upon that.

You must understand clearly why Jesus spoke and acted thus towards this woman. It was a lesson and example for the present and the future. He wished to call the attention of the Jews to the faith and perseverance of a woman who did not share their opinions. It was to consolidate the work which he had undertaken, that Jesus allowed them still to believe for a time in their superiority in the eyes of the Lord. Take notice that it was not until the end of his mission, and to his disciples only, that Jesus gave the command to go forth to preach to all the world. He made no allusion to the Gentiles in his public addresses, and all his attention seemed to be concentrated on the Jewish nation.

The Jews supposed that the children meant themselves;

but in the eyes of Jesus the children are those who believe and follow the divine law. At the present day the Church like the ancient Jews claims the monopoly of the divine family, while the Jews who live scattered over your globe regard themselves as the true children of God. And you? we will not say that you alone are the children who let the crumbs fall under the table to feed the little dogs; but you, Spiritists, are more ready than others to be called the children of God. Be therefore what those ought to be who desire to bear this great name worthily. Let your faith be strong; stand boldly by your opinions and your actions; never tamper with your conscience, and accept the children's bread, but distribute a large portion to the hungry little dogs who ask to share in the bread of life and truth. But for this you need a lively, active, and productive faith, shrinking from nothing, and frightened at nothing. You need a fruitful love, which sheds its holy seed over all the earth to stimulate it to produce good fruits. And what is most difficult of all to you, you require complete self-abnegation, a total forgetfulness of offences, a charity of the heart and lips, which not only pardons, but even forgets that it has been offended; a mutual help and support by which the strongest, the cleverest, the richest, and the most intelligent upholds him who is inferior to himself, without even perceiving his own superiority. You are told in blameworthy language that the hidden fault is forgiven; but we tell you truly that hidden kindness and pardon are ten times greater than those which make themselves felt, or which look for thanks.

Be ye then perfect as far as the imperfection of your nature permits. You can accomplish much; much more than you dare to hope. Exert all the resources of your intelligence, and all the powers of your heart to acquire the perfection that we expect of you, for it will exhale from your hearts like a fertilizing perfume, and will equalize the condition of man over all the earth by spreading the virtues which we preach to you in all hearts, and causing them to bear fruit.

Throw around you in profusion the crumbs that are given you to raise the hungry little dogs to the rank of the children of the Lord. Let the children be satisfied. These are all well-meaning men, whoever they are, and whatever may be their external worship or beliefs, who turn with faith to the light, and receive it. Let them be satisfied before the little dogs, who hold aloof from the table from which the crumbs of the bread of life and truth fall in abundance, and even refuse the bread which is offered them. These are those who reject the New Revelation from ignorance or prejudice, as the Scribes and Pharisees rejected the teachings of Christ, and afterwards those of the Apostles. The children are all those who seek out the truth, and strive to walk in the paths of justice, charity, love, and fraternity. In the eyes of the Lord, men are neither Catholics, Christians, Jews, Muslims, Pagans, Heretics, nor Orthodox, but are simply either submissive or rebellious to the Divine Law. Every one who strives to walk uprightly before the Lord, whatever name he bears, is the child of the Great Father.

As regards the daughter of the Canaanitish woman, it is enough to say that she was subjugated by an evil spirit. The obsessing spirit kept her always in motion, and forced her to abandon all the habits which are observed by more or less civilized races. She was freed from her sufferings at the moment that Jesus transmitted a mental command to the obsessing spirit. She was instantly restored to her right mind, and needed the rest which she had so long been unable to obtain ; and therefore her mother found her lying on the bed.

MARK, CHAP. VII.—VERSES 31-37.

Cure of the Deaf Mute.

(31) And coming forth again from the borders of Tyre and Sidon, he came to the Sea of Galilee through the midst of the coast of Decapolis. (32) And they bring to him a deaf stammerer. And they implore him that he should lay his hand on him. (33) And taking him aside from the crowd by himself, he put his fingers in his ears, and spitting, he touched his tongue. (34) And looking up to heaven, he groaned and

saith to him, Effatha ; that is to say, Be opened. (35) And immediately his ears were opened, and the band of his tongue was loosened, and he spoke correctly. (36) And he commanded them not to relate it to any one, but the more he commanded them, the more they proclaimed it all about. (37) And they were excessively astonished, saying, He has done all things well, for he makes the deaf to hear and the dumb to speak.

§ 178. We have discussed similar subjects several times already. At that time Jesus, the great physician of the mind, acted on matter, and appealed to the outward senses, but now he comes near to the blind and deaf, amid the great crowd of humanity, touches them with his benevolent finger, and says to them, "Effatha."

Raise your darkened minds to listen to the voices of the spirits of the Lord, who teach you his law. Open your eyes, which are veiled by matter, to see the brightness of the dawn of the new day which brings you the freedom of the Lord, which implies the free use of reason, the understanding of causes and effects, the application of knowledge and progressive advance in all things. Liberty is opposed to slavery, and the liberty of the Lord will break all your chains. Let your conscience be free, acknowledging no other guide than the love of God above all things, and loving your neighbour more than yourselves.

You are told that Jesus used outward means to cure the deaf and dumb man, but this was to set an example to his disciples and to mankind. Jesus could have restored speech and hearing to his patient by the mere act of his will through his magnetic power ; but his disciples and their followers needed to concentrate their force, and to employ prayer to attain the same end, with the aid of the superior spirits who dispensed the appropriate fluids under their hands. It was, therefore, necessary for the Master to teach them the various modes of operating which were in their power.

Let not sceptics who know nothing of the magnetic power of the pure and superior spirits, or of the properties of fluids on the human organism, say that these authenticated facts called miracles are impossible, for they are all in accordance with the laws of nature.

Magnetism proves the possibility of similar facts. Congenital deafness and the dumbness which results from it are sometimes due to a lesion, and sometimes to an obstruction in the organ of hearing. The fluidic influence, acting on the tympanum when it is distended or thickened, dilates or contracts it according to necessity, frees the fluids which have collected or are imprisoned in the tissues, restores the flexibility of the organ, and the deaf man hears, and ceases to be dumb.

You may wonder that this man, who had never spoken since his birth, should have spoken immediately. You may suppose that his speech was not at first as distinct as yours, and that whatever words he pronounced were sufficient to astonish the crowd. But, as Spiritists, you can also understand that this action was of great importance to the belief which Jesus wished to inspire, and therefore the spirits who always accompanied him, aided him immediately with their spiritual magnetism to develop the new faculty that he had just given to this man, and to facilitate his use of it by their inspiration. Was not his guardian angel present with him then?

MATTHEW, CHAP. XV.—VERSES 29-39. MARK,
CHAP. VIII.—VERSES 1-10.

Sick Persons Healed.—The Seven Loaves.

(29) And Jesus, having passed on thence, came near the Sea of Galilee; and having gone up into the mountain, he sat down there. (30) And many crowds came to him, having with them lame, blind, deaf, maimed, and many others, and cast them at the feet of Jesus, and he healed them. (31) So that the crowds wondered, seeing the dumb speaking, the maimed healthy, the lame walking, and the blind seeing, and they glorified the God of Israel. (32) And Jesus called his disciples to him, and said, I compassionate the multitude because they have remained with me three days already, and they have nothing to eat, and I will not send them away fasting, lest they should be exhausted on the road. (33) And his disciples say to him, Whence have we so much bread in the desert that we can satisfy such a crowd? (34) And Jesus saith to them, How many loaves have you? And they answered, Seven, and a few little fishes. (35) And he ordered the multitudes to rest on the ground. (36) And taking the seven loaves and the fishes, he gave thanks, and broke them, and gave to his disciples, and the disciples to the multitude. (37) And they all ate and were satisfied, and they took up the remainder of the fragments, seven

basketsful. (38) And they who had eaten were four thousand men, besides women and children. (39) And having sent away the crowds, he embarked in the boat, and came into the coasts of Magdala.

Mark viii. (1) In those days, when the crowd was very great, and had nothing to eat, Jesus called his disciples, and said to them, (2) I have compassion on the multitude, for they have already remained with me three days, and have nothing to eat. (3) And if I should send them away fasting to their homes, they would faint on the road, for some of them have come from a great distance. (4) And his disciples answered him, Whence shall any one be able to satisfy these with bread here in the wilderness? (5) And he asked them, How many loaves have you? And they said, Seven. (6) And he commanded the crowd to rest on the ground, and taking the seven loaves, he gave thanks, and brake, and gave them to his disciples to distribute them; and they distributed them to the multitude. (7) And they had a few small fishes; and having blessed them, he told them to distribute them also. (8) And they ate and were satisfied, and they took up seven basketsful of the fragments that were left over. (9) And they who had eaten were about four thousand; and he sent them away. (10) And he immediately embarked in the boat with his disciples, and came into the district of Dalmanutha.

§ 179. We need not repeat the explanations which we have already given of the cures which Jesus effected among the blind and dumb who were brought to him. Some were thus affected in consequence of subjugation, and others by physical diseases of the human organism. You know that in the former case the cure was effected by driving away the obsessing spirit, and by magnetic action, which put an end to the disorder which had thus been caused, and instantly restored the organs of speech and hearing to their normal state. In the second case, the cure was effected by the fluidic action of the powerful will and magnetic influence of Jesus. It was the same with all the other sick or infirm people. Jesus cured the cripples also by magnetic means, by restoring the elasticity which was wanting in the muscles.

You may refer to our former explanations of a similar miracle (§ 173) for information respecting the multiplication of the loaves and fishes. Do not wonder that the disciples asked, "How shall we find enough bread to satisfy the multitude?" They did not reflect upon what had happened before. Jesus repeated the miracle that it might lead to his subsequent explanation concerning the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees.

MATTHEW, CHAP. XVI.—VERSES 1-4. MARK,
CHAP. VIII.—VERSES 11-13.

The Pharisees and Sadducees ask for a Sign.

Matth. xvi. (1) And the Pharisees and Sadducees came to him tempting him, and asking him to show them a sign from heaven, (2) And he answered and said to them, When it is evening you say, Fine weather, for the sky is red. (3) And in the morning you say, To-day will be stormy, for the sky is red and gloomy. Hypocrites ! you know how to distinguish the face of the sky, but can you not distinguish the signs of the times ? (4) An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign, and no sign shall be given to it except the sign of Jonah the prophet. And he left them behind and went away.

Mark viii. (11) And the Pharisees came out and began to dispute with him, seeking from him a sign from heaven, and tempting him. (12) And groaning in his spirit, he saith, Why does this generation seek a sign ? Verily, I say to you, There shall no sign be given to this generation. (13) And leaving them, he embarked again in the boat, and crossed to the other side.

§ 180. These verses are of no importance. The terms Pharisees and Sadducees are a general expression used by the Apostles, for notwithstanding the historical and religious differences between the two parties, they were equally incredulous concerning the mission and doctrine of Jesus. The Pharisees and Sadducees came to Jesus to test him ; that is to prove him in the wrong, because they did not acknowledge that he was able to comply with their demands. They asked him to show them a sign in heaven, or some other useless demonstration of his power, but they had no definite idea what. They would have liked Jesus either to stop the course of the stars, or to make some vision appear in the sky. He who asks to see something often does not know what it is he wishes to see ; and even if his desires were to be gratified at the expense of the laws of nature, he would try to explain it away from his own point of view, and would ask for something else.

The two versions both reproduce the words of Jesus and mutually complete each other. "This wicked and adulterous generation demands a sign from heaven. Verily I say to you, that no sign shall be given it but the sign of the prophet Jonah."*

* This is explained at § 161 (vol. ii. pp. 26-49).

You are told that Jesus groaned deeply. He wished to call the attention of his disciples to the miserable pride and blindness of these guilty spirits, which would subject them to a long and cruel expiation.

§ 181. Is it correct to apply the words of Jesus to those incredulous persons of the present day who demand a sign to prove the truth of Spiritism, in a similar spirit to the Scribes and Pharisees?

Most certainly.

MATTHEW, CHAP. XVI.—VERSES 5-12. MARK,
CHAP. VIII.—VERSES 14-21.

Leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees.

Matth. xvi. (5) And his disciples, coming to the other side, had forgotten to take bread. (6) And Jesus said to them, See, and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees. (7) And they talked among themselves, saying, We have taken no bread. (8) And when Jesus knew it, he said to them, Why do ye debate among yourselves, O ye of little faith, because ye have taken no bread? (9) Do ye not know nor consider the five loaves of the five thousand, and how many baskets you took up? (10) Nor the seven loaves of the four thousand, and how many baskets you took up? (11) How is it you did not know that I did not speak to you about bread when I told you to beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees? (12) Then they understood that he did not speak to them about the leaven of bread, but about the doctrine of the Pharisees and Sadducees.

Mark viii. (14) And they had forgotten to take bread, and they had only one loaf with them in the boat. (15) And he commanded them, saying, Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, and of the leaven of Herod. (16) And they debated with each other, saying, We have no bread. (17) And when Jesus knew it, he saith to them, Why do you debate because you have no bread? do you not know, neither understand? is your heart still hardened? (18) Having eyes, do you not see? and having ears, do you not hear? and do you not remember? (19) When I broke the five loaves among the five thousand, how many basketsful of fragments did you take up? They say to him, Twelve. (20) And when the seven among the four thousand, how many basketsful of fragments did you take up? (21) And they said, Seven. And he said to them, How is it that you do not understand?

§ 182. The disciples themselves give you the explanations of the words of Jesus by the interpretation which they put upon them. You also, new disciples of Jesus, must beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, Sadducees, and Herod; that is, of all the promptings of pride. Beware of indolent submission to authority, so far as authority attempts to control your conscience and moral actions.

Be humble-minded and submit to your superiors, whoever they are ; render to Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's, but never forget that it is God who makes Cæsars, and that he has authority over all. But beware of an idle submission to authority. You should resist respectfully but firmly, all opposition whatsoever which seeks to hinder the fulfilment of the will of God through his good spirits who communicate with men to finish the work of the Christianity of Christ by means of the New Revelation, to regenerate humanity by light and truth, to establish universal fraternity by mutual justice, love, and charity, and thus to fulfil the words of Christ, "You have but one Master and are all brethren." Whatever opposition you may meet with you ought respectfully but firmly to claim the right to exercise your free will, and liberty of conscience. Truth must spread ; therefore let it not be stifled in its birth.

MARK, CHAP. VIII.—VERSES 22-26.

Cure of a Blind Man.

(22) And he comes to Bethsaida, and they bring him a blind man, and beseech him to touch him. (23) And taking the hand of the blind man, he led him out of the village, and spitting in his eyes, he laid his hands upon him, and asked him if he could see anything. (24) And looking up, he said, I see the men as if they were trees walking. (25) Then he laid his hands upon his eyes again, and made him look up, and he was completely restored, and saw everything distinctly. (26) And he sent him away to his house, saying, Neither go into the village, nor tell anybody in the village.

§ 183. Jesus was not alone, but accompanied as usual ; and the order that he gave related to the vision of the blind man. When Jesus first laid his hands upon him, he opened his spiritual sight, and the man saw the spirits who were assembled round Jesus, and who appeared to his dull perceptions like men of gigantic stature. The second laying on of hands developed the physical organs, and the man then saw only men like himself, for his physical sight was restored to him.

The prohibition of Jesus referred to the first vision. Only his disciples had heard the words of the blind man, for the

crowd had been kept at some distance by the ring which the disciples formed round the Master.

When Jesus laid his hands on the blind man for the first time and opened his spiritual sight, he willed that the spirits who were assembled round him, should accidentally render the blind man clairvoyant by disengaging the spirit from matter. We can only explain this to you by referring to the action of magnetic spiritual phenomena. The action is the same without the sleep. We do not here refer to the phenomena of spiritual magnetism only, but also to human magnetism designed to develop spiritual sight. The spirit acquires greater power by contact with the human fluids which surround it: its perisprit is doubled as it were, by the emanations, and is enabled to separate itself from its bodily covering, and the spirit thus recovers a kind of liberty for the moment.

Magnetism is still only in its infancy. Man has too much neglected the power that the Lord has placed in his hands. He has scarcely glanced at the first page of the introduction of this great book of knowledge. Let him turn it over diligently, and lend all his attention to it. Magnetism is not an amusement for the curious; it is not an unimportant science destined only to relieve a few sufferers, but a grave and profound study, needing for success, unlimited disinterestedness, a lively faith, and an invincible love of the neighbour; with the aid of these three auxiliaries you may boldly pluck the fruits of the tree of knowledge, for you will reject evil with horror, and advance with long strides in the path of progress.

Magnetizers, we address ourselves specially to you. You have in yourselves the source of all discoveries and all knowledge. Let earnest toil open to you the pages of this great book, and you will discover some new beauty every day, and will see how great may be the power of men when sustained by the love of the good, the beautiful, and the true.

The earnest magnetizer wishing to aid in the progress of humanity should make a careful selection of somnambulists to second him in his researches. One alone is not suffi-

cient, for a spirit who is developed in one science may be completely ignorant of another. We do not speak here of human science, for the subject who is most simple-minded in the incarnate state may be far advanced spiritually, if he is also simple-hearted ; and you know that disengagement may lead to revelations which are unsuspected by men, through the agency of superior spirits who make use of such a subject as their instrument.

In selecting subjects you should try to find pure and devoted hearts, and instruct them in magnetic science, by training them early and gradually for the kind of work for which they show themselves fit. In the ecstatic state one can assist a chemist, another can shed light on the dark pages of history, and another can solve mechanical problems over which men grow grey in vain endeavours to attain them. But for this end it is necessary that both the magnetizer and his subject should be pure in heart, seeking for no mundane profit in science. Otherwise both magnetizer and subject will find themselves deceived in their hopes, and deceitful spirits will spread their misleading veil over the most serious questions, for the superior spirits only approach him who is pure, according to the laws of spiritual attraction, and they only aid those who are pure in heart in their researches and studies, and who labour solely for the progress of humanity with perfect disinterestedness, and never seek to make a worldly use of their knowledge. These alone among you are worthy of being the auxiliaries of God and of the superior spirits in the advance and accomplishment of progress.

As magnetism is still in its infancy, you should study its tendencies and powers with care, in order to develop it. Apply yourselves to this, and you will arrive more rapidly at the culminating point to which all your efforts tend. What is the real condition of the somnambulist? That of the spirit when almost free from the body. The flesh is no more to him than an instrument which aids him to transmit his thoughts and sensations to you ; just as you yourselves, both magnetizer and subject, are instruments of our own.

When the somnambulic condition is developed and often repeated, it raises the spirit by accustoming it to free itself from its chain, even during the waking state ; and gradually, by diffusing its emanations round you, you will accustom man to live as it were out of himself. The atmosphere around you will become charged with these human fluids, and as the mirage which floats on the horizon grows out of the clouds which surround, and combine with it, so will these fluids attract the ambient fluids around you, and thus hasten the development of your faculties and the emancipation of your spirit.

When the blind man saw the spirits, he could not understand what passed before his spiritual vision, for he knew nothing of the effects of spiritual disengagement. Jesus afterwards spoke of his attendant spirits, when he said that if he desired, his Father would send thousands of angels to serve him. As these spirits were not bound to the earth, and as the more intelligent always rivet the attention, the spiritual eyes of the blind man were raised towards the superior regions of those whom he beheld.

In spiritual apparitions, or when the spirit of the seer is disengaged, what first strikes the attention is the seat of the spirit, the upper portion of the body, and it is only afterwards that he notices other forms provided that it is necessary ; for they are generally veiled in a kind of mist.

Spiritual dimensions are not reckoned according to your measures. The spirits rising in space were taller than trees to the spiritual eyes of the blind man, and their indefinite forms did not keep his attention fixed on figures that he distinguished. We may add that spirits, although human in form, are generally more developed. In worlds superior to yours, the form of man himself increases in delicacy of outline, and in size.

As your earth is still morally an inferior world, magnetic-spiritual phenomena are often caused by evil spirits who produce violent, painful, or dangerous fluidic effects, such as corporeal or moral subjugations. At other times, they

are caused by frivolous and deceitful spirits, who produce mystifications. Nevertheless these effects take place under the supervision of the spirit guides. However violent or dangerous they appear, it is only because they form part of the series of experiences which the incarnate spirit must undergo, and the protecting spirits let them take their course.

There is a purpose in all things, and if you carefully seek for the causes which have led to mystification, you will always find either systematic incredulity, presumptuous confidence, an inexperienced credulity which needs to be enlightened, or else to the incarnate spirit is commissioned to convey some lesson to those present.

When Jesus laid his hands on the blind man, his sight was restored to him by the powerful will and magnetic action of the Master. His complaint was an accidental blindness of long duration. Jesus had no need to spit on his eyes, and lay his hands on him, or to open his spiritual vision ; but he acted thus to teach, and to set an example to the present and the future.

As regards his disciples, he had a double object. Firstly, he desired to teach them the various modes of operating (as is explained at p. 96), and, secondly, by opening the spiritual sight of the blind man, he called their attention to various mysteries of the other world ; the immortality of the soul, and its individuality after death. This was confirmed by the knowledge of spiritual apparitions which some of them had acquired through seeing medianimity, as is also the case at the present time with some of you.

By opening the spiritual sight of the blind man, he likewise showed the men of the future (especially those who should be enlightened by the New Revelation, and who should accept the spiritual light) that the man whose spirit is dominated by matter is morally and intellectually blind in a spiritual point of view ; that he can only recover his sight in proportion as his spirit frees itself sufficiently to dominate over matter ; that this leads to the moral progress of which the opening of the spiritual sight of the blind man is an

emblem ; that moral progress is the source, instrument, and means of material and intellectual progress symbolized by the restoration of physical sight ; and that this opens to man under spirit-influence the progressive knowledge of the mysteries of the other world, the discoveries and secrets of divine science, and the horizons of the infinite.

MATTHEW, CHAP. XVI.—VERSES 13-20; MARK,
CHAP. VIII.—VERSES 27-30; LUKE, CHAP. IX.
VERSES 18-21.

Reincarnation.—Mission of Peter.

Matth. xvi. (13) And when Jesus came into the parts of Cæsarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I, the Son of Man, am? (14) And they said, Some say John the Baptist, others Elijah, and others Jeremiah, or one of the prophets. (15) He saith to them, And whom say ye that I am? (16) And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. (17) And Jesus answered and said to him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar Jona for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father in the heavens. (18) And I say unto thee that thou art Peter, and upon this rock will I build my church, and the gates of Hades shall not hinder it. (19) And I will give thee the keys of the kingdom of the heavens, and that which thou bindest upon earth shall be bound in the heavens, and what thou loosest upon earth shall be loosened in the heavens. (20) Then he commanded his disciples to tell no one that he is Jesus the Christ.

Mark viii. (27) And Jesus and his disciples went forth into the villages of Cæsarea Philippi, and he questioned his disciples on the road, saying to them, Whom do men say that I am? (28) And they answered, John the Baptist, but others say, Elijah, and others, One of the prophets. (29) And he saith to them, And whom say ye that I am? And Peter answered and said to him, Thou art the Christ. (30) And he objected to their telling any one about him.

Luke ix. (18) And it came to pass that while he was alone, praying, his disciples came to him, and he questioned them, saying, Whom do the multitudes say that I am? (19) And they answered and said, John the Baptist, but others Elijah, and others that one of the prophets of the ancients has risen again. (20) And he said to them, And whom say ye that I am? And Peter answered and said, The Christ of God. (21) And he cautioned them not to make this announcement to any one.

§ 184. A special and distinct explanation is here necessary.

(Matth. xvi. 13-17; Mark viii. 27-29; Luke ix. 18-20).—These verses are designed to remind men of the principles

of Reincarnation, and also to fix their attention on the medi-
an-
imic relations which may exist between themselves and
spiritual influences. Jesus thus sanctioned beforehand what
it was reserved for the New Revelation to demonstrate,
explain, and develop in spirit and in truth from both points
of view.

Firstly, they confirm in a few words the great truth of
Reincarnation, which is doubted and rejected by so many.
Matth. xvi. 13, 14, shows us that public opinion attributed
a spiritual origin to Jesus anterior to his present existence
in a new body.

This report implied both the pre-existence of the soul and
Reincarnation, and spread without being questioned, be-
cause the Hebrews were taught by ancient though confused
traditions, that a man could return several times to the earth
to complete a task that he had undertaken, but which had
been interrupted by his death.

To return to Jesus. Catholics, Protestants, and Jews
who alike reject the pre-existence of the soul and Reincarna-
tion, do you doubt the superior mission of Jesus? Chris-
tians ! it is the basis of your faith, for you derive his origin
from the throne of the Eternal. Jews ! you cannot but
admire the character of the Reformer, even though you
revile him ; for you treated him as your fathers treated the
prophets. At length you admit that he was a man of
superior genius, and animated by good intentions ; in short,
a Reformer. What is the answer of this man whose knowledge
amazed the doctors of the law, even at the age of twelve
years ?

Zealous Catholics ! what is the answer of him who de-
scended from the Father to bring light to men, and whom
you say had beheld the secrets of nature and creation from
all eternity ? Did he reprove his disciples on account of a
widely-diffused heresy ? he who came to teach them truths
from on high ? Did he tell them that the soul is created
for the body which it inhabits, and can never return to the
earth when it has once left it ? Did he tell them that the
creation of the soul is so closely linked with that of the

body, that when they are separated, the soul no longer possesses human thought nor active life, but is lost in space in a manner very difficult to explain? According to the Catholic Church, what becomes of those who are dead and are said to be tainted with original sin?

There is such a variety of opinions on this point, that it is difficult to state them, and in setting them forth as we have done, we have brought forward the view of the Catholic Church or at least of its ministers. What is to become of him who has not been baptized? Damnation? Has he deserved it? Limbo, if he has lived in ignorance? Is this justice on the part of the Lord? What has the new-born infant done to make him undeserving in the sight of the Lord? And what has he done even after baptism to be ranked among the elect? What has the sincere and intelligent man done who has accidentally missed baptism, that he should be confined amongst those infantile souls who are condemned to an eternity without sorrow, but equally without joy? Would you send a man to Purgatory to expiate for a longer or shorter period the sin of being born in darkness instead of in the light, and for not having worked out for himself the Catholic faith, which so many know and neglect because it does not harmonize with their intelligence? You can easily perceive that all these various positions are equally inadmissible to thinking men. But Jesus, instead of reproving his disciples for accepting an error, and telling them that the soul is created for the flesh which it inhabits, and neither can nor ought to return to the earth, contented himself with rejoining, "And whom say ye that I am?" Does not this simple question confirm the principle implied, and admit the possibility that he might have been John the Baptist, or Elijah, or Jeremiah, or some one else? Jesus spoke with reference both to the present and the future. His language respecting Reincarnation needed to be veiled, for the time was not yet come to reveal its principles and consequences openly to men.

(Matth. xvi. 16, 17.)—Peter, who was gifted with medi-
an-
imic faculties in a very high degree, was, unconsciously

to himself, rendered a speaking medium. This passage unfolds to you the entire revelation thus made through Peter, as well as the future revelations to be made by the spirits of the Lord, through sincere and humble-minded mediums like Peter; their chosen instruments to transmit the truth to men.

Do not defend the inspiration and revelations of the "saints" and the "Fathers of the Church" by saying, "They were mediums, and we must receive their words blindly." We can explain to you, who know the truth, why you should not defend those reputed, but often false inspirations; but what importance will the incredulous attach to our explanations? Do you not know that spirit influence has existed in all ages, and that there have always been mediums, some of whom perfectly understood the source of their knowledge, while others were ignorant of it?

Thus the Apostles, Disciples, and Evangelists wrought the miracles of the faith which they taught, by their medianimic powers, and with the aid of the spirits of the Lord, and thus spread the faith among ignorant and material men. The Apostles and their disciples were mediums of various powers, as the instruments of the great superior wills above them. Their work was afterwards carried on by their disciples, the first Fathers of the Church of Christ. We do not speak of those who perform acts of faith among the clergy, but of the sincere and devoted early Christians who died obscure and unknown after a laborious and dangerous life of propaganda, but who did not seek for publicity or spiritual honours.

At a later period, medianimity gradually fell into disuse, because it was needful for events to take their course, that these might be a fusion of all nations, whether advanced or backward, and because this knowledge would have led to great disorders, if it had become general, while men were wicked and surrounded by evil spirits. Where one man would have walked in the ways of the Lord, thousands would willingly have consorted with spirits of as low a moral grade as themselves.

Thus it was necessary that medianimity should gradually become restricted to a few, subsequently to the rise of Christianity, and should then disappear altogether, or at least remain in abeyance, so that the existence of these faculties was forgotten by all; and those whose pride or cupidity led them to make use of them, were imprisoned or burned. During the long period which followed the rise of Christianity, which was filled with clerical and religious despotism, ignorance, intolerance, and fanaticism, you see mediums, whether conscious or unconscious of the influence, treated as sorcerers, either by the secular powers, or by the Roman Inquisition.* These mediums were regarded as possessed by the demon, or as heretics, though some were sincere believers, who were subject to physical manifestations caused by evil influences, while others were free-thinkers, who proclaimed truths and doctrines contrary to the teachings of the human Church, under good influences.

The Fathers of the Church were mediums, as we have said; but you know that medianimity is dangerous to those who do not know how to use it; for the incarnate spirit attracts to himself spirits who are in sympathy with his tendencies, preconceived ideas, or general tone of thought, according to the prejudices or traditions of his surroundings. Thus a medium may be the instrument of deceitful spirits, unconsciously to himself, though it is palpable to others. On the other hand, he may be the instrument of good spirits, when he is chosen, like Peter, to reveal a truth which the Lord desires to make known at that period.

Are you not aware, too, that conjuring, or the exaltation of the incarnate spirit, may be mistaken for, or passed off as inspiration, when it is only the result of a weak or wicked organization? Do you believe that high and holy influences have given rise to the fastings, macerations, and flagellations

* This very persecution supplies us with a satisfactory explanation, on recognised scientific principles, of the comparative rarity of medianimic phenomena in modern times. See Wallace's "Miracles and Modern Spiritualism," pp. 22 and 23, note.—TRANSL.

enjoined by some religions, or to lives spent idly and uselessly apart from the battles and temptations of the world, but also apart from its victories ;—lives wasted in retreats, amid mortifications which the “demon” only could inspire, but which the God of love and mercy rejects ?

Could He who entrusted life to man as a precious deposit which he ought to preserve, and of which he must render a strict account ; could he approve of the tortures which the recluses inflicted upon themselves, and which seemed to have no other use but to shorten their existence, and to alter its end and object, which every man should pursue according to the divine law, by practising the law of love proclaimed by Christ, and which he sanctioned by his teaching and example ?

Although the saints and Fathers of the Church were sometimes inspired, and their medianimity was unconscious, and often obvious, yet some evil influence was also frequently present, due to one or other of the various causes which we have mentioned ; and this led to errors or abuses under the guise of miracles or revelations from on high, which the Church regarded as infallible when they took place among those whose sanctity she regarded as proved by their mysticism or asceticism, and by the observance of all her material rites and ceremonies.

(Matth. xvi. 18, 19).—These words should be understood in a spiritual, and therefore medianimic sense. Peter, being an advanced and developed medium, was a powerful instrument in the hands of the spirits of the Lord for the dissemination of the light. All the disciples of Jesus contributed to this, but each had his own special mission ; and Peter, whose physical organization was sufficiently pliable to lend itself to all medianimic influences, was a more elevated spirit than the other faithful Apostles, in intelligence, if not in purity, and had more extended powers. He was thus the foundation-stone of the edifice, and it was upon him that the Church of Christ was constructed ; for the faculty which he possessed became more and more developed, and formed the chief corner-stone. All true Spiritists, and especially

sincere and humble mediums, may work to construct this edifice, each contributing your stone, and you may thus "bind and loose" on earth, by the light which you will receive and shed around you more and more ; and the Lord will "bind and loose" in heaven.

You must not suppose that man, who is always a sinner, can absolve or condemn, or pass judgment on earth without appeal, even before God. But those who live in integrity of heart and soul always receive increasing light from the good spirits, and thus become more and more fitted to judge of earthly and heavenly things, to direct their brethren in the right way, and to distinguish those who wander from it, and those who follow it faithfully. This explanation is needed, because the Church has completely perverted the meaning of these words.

(Matth. xvi. 18.)—These words were addressed to Peter specially, but formed the starting-point of the widely accredited error of the infallibility of the Pope, who is called the successor of Peter. He is the successor of the clerical organization, but not of the worship based upon the emblem of the paschal sacrifice.

Peter was an advanced and devoted spirit, and a most excellent medium (as was necessary), and he was gifted with unusually clear perceptions, by the will of Jesus and of the superior spirits. His piercing eye sounded the depths of the conscience, and the most secret thoughts of the heart. Was he not in sympathy with the divine messengers before his mission began? He could thus bind and loose on earth, for he did no more than pronounce decrees which had been delivered to him spiritually ; but, since his time, how many of those who have called themselves his successors have been like Peter?

The Church of Christ originated in the assembly of faithful adherents chosen by Peter and the other Apostles, who were aware of his superiority to themselves, and often followed his directions in their efforts to spread the good news. This Church was composed of sincere believers, who accepted the doctrine of love which the Master came to

teach. Some were Jews, and others Gentiles ; but from whatever soil the stone may have been dug, it helps to form the monument.

The Church of Christ is composed of all the children of the Lord who are submissive and zealous, and are willing, even when they cannot act. But it does not consist of temples built by man, which, as Paul says, God does not inhabit. Every one forms part of the Church of Christ (whatever may be the outward religion in which he has been born through reincarnation) who sincerely endeavours with all his might to follow the divine law, which is written in the hearts of all men.

(Matth. xvi. 18).—Peter presides over the progress of the faith and the development of intelligence. He watches over the fulfilment of the promises of Jesus, and has retained his spiritual mission, after accomplishing his human mission, during which he began to build the Church of Christ with the aid of the Apostles and the disciples who assembled round them. He continues and will complete the work by his spiritual mission.

You must understand that as the Church of Christ is composed of all the children of the Lord, suffering and expiation cannot affect a man who has lived in integrity of heart and soul, and has endeavoured to fulfil all his obligations and duties according to the divine law towards the Lord and towards men. When Peter was accomplishing his earthly mission, he was an energetic and devoted disciple who was faithful unto death. Whoever shall build upon such a foundation need not fear the gates of Hades : that is to say, expiation, and the sufferings of remorse ; for his conduct will be just and pure.

(Matth. xvi. 19).—"The keys of the kingdom of the heavens" signify the exact knowledge of the method of attaining to moral perfection. Jesus then referred to the present and future, relatively to Peter. As regards his human mission, the words "bind and loose" allude to his power of pronouncing spiritual decrees. As regards his spiritual mission in the present age, when the predicted era of the advent of the

Spirit is in preparation, these words signify that Peter will bind and loose on earth, when the faculty that he possessed during his life will continue to increase, and will aid in the construction of the Church of Christ, of which he is the chief corner-stone. He will likewise teach men to bind and loose by transmitting (through true Spiritists, and especially sincere and humble mediums) the truth, and the means of attaining to moral perfection. This does not mean that men will absolve or condemn, for this power belongs only to God, and to his Christ, to whom he has given unlimited power over your planet, but that they will live in integrity of heart and soul, and receive more and more light and aid from the good spirits, and thus grow continually better able to judge of earthly and heavenly things; to direct their brethren in the right way, and to see clearly who follows it faithfully, and who wanders from it.

Jesus forbade his disciples to tell any one that he was the Christ of God, because it would have interfered with the necessary course of events.

§ 185. The Church of Rome appropriates to herself the power and mission of Peter, as his successor, and proclaims "Out of the Church, there is no salvation."

We have told you that the words of Jesus were addressed to Peter personally; and no man on your earth could or ought to apply them to himself. The Church has completely perverted and falsified the meaning of these words by human interpretations, based on the letter which killeth, in ignorance of the Spirit which giveth life. The Church might indeed appropriate these words to herself, in their true spiritual sense, if she walked simply in the path marked out by Jesus; and all men (Jews or Gentiles) might likewise lay claim to them if they walked in this path, with the aid, inspiration, and support of good spirits, like the Apostle Peter. But they do not apply to those of the clergy who perform acts of faith, but to the sincere and devoted early Christians, and their imitators.

Let the Church return to the path which she has quitted, and follow the footsteps of the Apostles, in the light of the

New Revelation. Let the pastor who claims to be the successor of Peter, cast aside his purple robes, and let him repair and uphold his Church, which rests, or ought to rest, on faith; and it will be given to him to bind and loose, in the true sense of these words; to work at the construction of the Church of Christ, and to aid in its guidance. But faith is humble, and shuns pomp and splendour; its sight is dimmed by the lustre of gold and purple; and the jewels of the tiara have caused it to forget the simple staff, coarse mantle, and bare feet of Peter; and Faith has fled in alarm to take refuge among the simple and faithful. Open your hearts to Faith, for she seeks and calls you, and asks for a home among you. Do not reject her advances, and when the time has come, the successors of Peter will descend from the throne to sit on the moss by the wayside.

When the sceptre of the "Head of the Church" has given place to the pilgrim's staff; when the purple has been cast aside, and the coarse mantle shall cover the shoulders of those whom men call "the Holy Father," and the Cardinals, (for all must return to the humility from which they should never have departed); then the faith in your hearts will rise up, strong and powerful, to rule over the Church of Christ once more. The successor of St. Peter will extend his holy hand to bless the universe, and the universe will accept his benediction, when he shall proclaim to the Catholics, "Rise up; I am a man like yourselves, and I verily believe that God is no respecter of persons, but in every nation, he who fears him, and whose works are righteous is acceptable to him." And he shall proclaim to all men whomsoever, whatever their outward forms of religion, "God has taught me to call no man on earth profane or impure. Call no man Father on earth, for you have all one Father in the heavens; call no man Master, for you have but one Teacher, and therefore but one Master; Christ; and ye are all brethren. Follow the teachings and example of the Master, and his simple and sublime morality, by endeavouring to walk in his steps. Love God your Creator above all, and your neighbour as yourself; for these two commandments include

all the Law and the Prophets. Love one another, for the end of all the commandments is the charity which springs from a pure heart, a good conscience, and a sincere faith which shows itself in words and actions; for each will be requited according to his works, and all will be judged by and through their works. Reject all the doctrines and commandments of men, and worship the Father neither in this mountain nor in Jerusalem, and join yourselves, whether Jews or Gentiles, and apart from all external forms of worship, to the great human family; and thus yield more and more to the sway of the law of love, fraternity, and unity. Be ye thus the true worshippers required by the Father; the worshippers of the Father in spirit and in truth; and there shall thus be one fold and one shepherd, Christ; and the Church of Christ will be erected, for you will all be the children of the Lord. Labour, therefore, at the work of regeneration, for you are all called to be elected."

Pray that it may be thus, my children; we are all labouring zealously towards this end, and the time is at hand. May the Lord extend his powerful hand over you.

PETER blesses you.

§ 186. The Roman Church asserts that she is always aided and inspired by the Holy Spirit, and consequently infallible; and avails herself of these pretensions to denounce the Spiritual Revelation as subversive of her teaching and authority.

This is a human pretence, originating in pride and presumption. It is a blind and false assertion, which no thinking man can admit; for the infallibility of the Church must also imply the infallibility of the men who compose it.

You must not suppose that the mysterious influence which directs your important actions would guide you if you rendered yourselves unworthy of communion with high and holy spirits. The Holy Spirit under whose inspiration the leaders of the Church pretend to dictate their laws, would not descend to animate impure bodies, or whited sepulchres; and many have not even taken the trouble to become so! The secret influence which guides man according to the will of God, is only granted when the recipient is worthy to receive it.

Is there unity in their councils? Were the leading bishops and cardinals of the Church unanimous in their discussions and decisions, and do you believe that the justice and equity which they call the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, are always on the side of the majority? Were truth, faith, and virtue always to be found there? Surely not. Have you not seen divided opinions in their councils? But if the members had all been inspired by the Holy Spirit, there would have been no difference of opinion. Have their decisions always been conformable with the justice and equity which you have a right to expect from them? or have you found material and personal interests clothed in the garb of religion, instead?

Have you not seen treachery and revenge arming themselves with the cross to combat "heresies," and to condemn the innocent, under the influence of the very intolerance and dogmatism which the Divine Model has proscribed? Where was their inspiration during their debates? Where was the Holy Spirit, and what were its functions?

In speaking of the Holy Spirit, we have confined ourselves to the language of the Roman Church. We might have spoken of the superior and good spirits, for the Holy Spirit is only a figurative expression, denoting the sacred phalanx of the spirits of the Lord; but the Church does not admit this, and still teaches the erroneous opinion of the Hebrews that the Holy Spirit is God himself; and she considers it a separate, though indivisible part of the great Whole.

§ 187. The Roman Church pretends that auricular confession was instituted by Jesus (Matth. xvi. 19; John xx. 22, 23), and that it is therefore obligatory.

This is another human error, which has arisen from the Church attributing to herself the words which Jesus addressed to Peter and the Apostles personally; and she has thus completely mistaken and falsified their meaning and object. When Jesus said to the Apostles, "Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted to them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained," he spoke in reference to what he

had previously said, "Receive the Holy Spirit;" and thus gave them personally the power to translate into human language the decrees which had been spiritually revealed to them by the superior spirits who were to direct them in the accomplishment of their mission.

Jesus never ordained confession as the Church has organized it. The starting-point was rational; but the origin of confession was the act of humility which every Christian was obliged to make, by publicly acknowledging to his brethren the faults which he had committed, or even meditated.

The principle of this was founded on Jesus having said to his disciples, "Confess to one another." By this he implied, "Bear open witness to your faith, one to another, and conceal nothing which might conduce to your mutual support."

On this account Jesus has commissioned us to repeat his actual words, and although they were not recorded, and have therefore no *human* authenticity, yet the disciples learned them from their Master, and repeated them. James said to the early Christians (v. 16), "Confess your faults to one another, and pray for one another." And Paul, the Apostle of the Gentiles, says, writing to the Hebrews (iii. 12, 13; x. 24, 25), "Take heed, brethren, lest there should be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. But encourage each other daily, while it is called to-day, lest any of you should be hardened by the deceit of sin. . . . And let us consider one another to provoke to love and good works; not neglecting the assembling of them, as is the custom with some, but encouraging each other, and so much the more as you see the day approaching."

The first Christian assemblies consisted of brethren who confessed aloud, before all, the faults which they had committed, and the weaknesses and failings to which they had yielded. This was the origin of confession, which gradually became more restricted, and was finally heard by one only, who was humanly commissioned to absolve or to condemn. Nevertheless at the commencement of this

decision, the confessor, who was no longer the sinner who proclaimed his faith, his failings, his weaknesses, and his faults in public, but had become the confidant of his brothers, was required (without naming the guilty party) to submit the facts to the judgment of an assembly composed of the bishop and the deacons of the Church, and to communicate to the penitent the absolution or the condemnation which they pronounced. But as the great extension of Christianity and the number of penitents made the length of these proceedings more and more inconvenient, the power of judgment was finally vested altogether in the confessor.

The words of Jesus, "Confess to one another," imply that human equality and complete fraternity required that he who had just made a sincere confession before the assembly of his brethren, should in his turn listen to the confession of each of those present, and thus after having been the culprit, he became the judge.

When this confession was practised in sincerity, it restrained men by the fear of revealing even a doubtful thought, and inspired them with indulgence towards each other, for each feared the judgment of his brethren, and consequently set the example of fraternal charity; but can you suppose that confession of this kind could long remain possible?

Men were led astray by the new vices of a new era, and gradually absented themselves from the Christian assemblies; and the confession of faults would have entirely ceased if it had been maintained in its primitive purity. It therefore became necessary to restrict the audience, and confession was made before a small selected number of upright men. Then, as license increased, the need of still further restricting the number became obvious; and at length the duty of hearing the confession of faults was confided to one man only. Thus abuses crept in among those who were chosen to hear the confessions of their brethren, and to guide them by their advice. They frequently made an unworthy use of these confessions, and betrayed secrets which they ought to have kept.

The disciples of Jesus and their first followers were

animated by an enlightened zeal ; and being guided by the spirits of the Lord who were always ready to reveal the truth to them, they themselves had power to bind and to loose. Their successors were unworthy of this privilege, and wandered from the faith, though unwilling to lose the prerogative of infallibility. They also desired to bind and to loose, but the bonds which they have bound on your souls have never made any impression upon them, whereas those which they have loosed have often left deep traces behind. There is none infallible save God, and spirits only share in his infallibility in proportion to the inspirations which they receive, more or less directly from him, according to their rank in the spiritual hierarchy. Every spirit who has taken upon himself a fleshly body by human incarnation, is subject to the imperfections of the flesh. He may resist them more or less, but will always feel their influence.

The disciples of Jesus and their immediate followers were animated by an enlightened zeal, and inspired by the spirits of the Lord, and therefore possessed the power to bind and to loose, in the sense of being able to judge of the purity or the culpability of those who sought their advice, and consequently their judgment was just ; but none of them ever claimed the right to judge without appeal, and to absolve or to condemn. Do you not sometimes say to a criminal, "Do not commit this action, for you put yourself within reach of the law, and render yourself liable to such and such a punishment?" Do you not think, when you hear of the suicide of one of your brethren, that his expiation will be long and painful? And if you were near him when he was about to commit a desperate action, which would involve him in cruel sufferings, would you not exclaim, "Stay, madman ; the sword is raised over your head ; your hereafter will be filled with tortures ; you will continually behold your mutilated body, and reproach yourself for having deprived it of the existence which was entrusted to it. In the name of God, as well as for your own sake, stay your hand !"

We have given you two illustrations, one from the human

and one from the divine law. If you know the law, you can also foresee the punishment which it prescribes for such and such an offence. In the other case, spirit revelations enable you to foresee the punishment of an act which is reprehensible in the sight of God. It was thus that the Apostles and disciples received light, being inspired and directed by the spirits of the Lord.

§ 188. What have you to say about auricular confession, as organized by the Roman Church?

It will cease, but the time has not yet come. It is misleading to those who desire to walk in the ways of the Lord. It is a restraint upon weak minds; but it is, unfortunately, sometimes an abuse also; for the good in humanity is always surrounded with evil. For one timid and obedient person who is upheld by the advice of a pious and enlightened priest, there are a hundred at least who only visit the confessional to fulfil a form prescribed by the ritual. There are others who laugh at it, and turn it into a scandal; and many avoid it, having found that their spiritual guides abused their confidence, and made use of family secrets to their own advantage, but not to that of their penitents, and sought to turn the minds of men from the greatness and justice of God to imprison them in a round of trivial ideas and practices, which hamper them, and prevent them from turning to the Lord.

But these materialistic practices will one day cease, and men will perceive that they should love their God in the sincerity of their hearts, and that the best mode of showing their love to him is to walk in his path. Submission to the Father's will is the greatest proof of love which the son can give.

When worship shall be wholly comprised in sincere adoration, and in the practice of good works, love, charity, and fraternity, men will have become the worshippers of the Father in spirit and in truth, and will pursue the search for truth, in religion and science, with humility and disinterestedness, with no other object than that of personal and general progress. Then all men, whether Jews or Gentiles, will still

assemble in temples (independently of all external forms which now divide and separate them), to sing the praises of the Lord, and to extol his glory and his mercies. But he who is chosen unanimously by those present as the most worthy will preside over these solemn assemblies, and men will then vie with each other in love and virtue; for the elect of the assembly, the leader of the faithful, will be sure of the protection of the spirits of the Lord, and his revelations will be enlightened, and free from doubt and uncertainty. It is then that confession will cease to be the law of the Church, and will become a necessity of the soul. He who feels himself weak will come forward publicly to ask his brethren to aid him with their prayers; and in assemblies of one mind and one faith, will ask the protecting spirits to deliver him from evil thoughts, and to uphold his sinking courage.

Doubt not that the day of the kingdom of the Lord will yet come; and let not its delay discourage you, for the materials are not all ready, but the labourers are at work, and are shaping the stones which will serve to build the temple of the Lord.

§ 189. The Roman Church pretends that her system of auricular confession enables her to bind and to loose, and to absolve or retain sins; "Not," say the ministers, "by a mere declaration of the work of God on the sinner, but by a judicial act, and a sentence pronounced by the authority of a judge, binding by excommunication, and by the refusal or delay of absolution, and God will confirm the judgment of the ministers of the Catholic Church when they judge according to the rules which he prescribes for them in his word and in the Church."

Has anything but the pride of man led him to claim such a power as his own? An inferior creature, subject to all the vicissitudes of matter, and held in all the bonds of vice! Is it not the pride of man which has led him to imagine that God is the blind and yielding instrument of his revenge, his instincts, and his policy, who will ratify his uncontrolled decisions? It is the madness of pride, which leads man either to deny his God, or to set himself in his place.

Let the Church start afresh from the point where Peter and the Apostles and their first disciples left her. She will then discover the Church of Christ, which they began to build, and which the Spirit of Truth is gradually completing

through the New Revelation. Let her seek to understand the true sense of the words which Jesus addressed to Peter and the Apostles, and which we have now revealed to you in the name of the Master; and then she also, like true Spiritists, will labour at the erection of the Church of Christ, under the inspiration of the Spirit of Truth. Then will the Church be really able to loose and to bind; not to absolve or to condemn her brethren, but to live in integrity of heart and soul, and to receive more and more light from the good spirits, and thus become more and more fitted to judge of earthly and heavenly things, and (apart from all external observances) to direct her brethren in the right course; and to perceive plainly those who walk in that path, and those who wander from it.

MATTHEW, CHAP. XVI.—VERSES 21-23. MARK,
CHAP. VIII.—VERSES 31-33. LUKE, CHAP. IX.—
VERSE 22.

Jesus foretells his "Death," and rebukes Peter.

Matth. xvi. (21) From that time Jesus began to show to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and high priests and scribes, and be put to death, and raised up on the third day. (22) And Peter laid hands on him, and began to object, saying, Be it far from thee, O Lord, this shall not be unto thee. (23) And he turned round and said to Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan, thou art a stumbling-block to me, for thou understandest not the things of God, but the things of men.

Mark viii. (31) And he began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and high priests and scribes, and be put to death, and rise again after three days. (32) And he spoke this saying openly. And Peter came to him, and began to reproach him. (33) And he turned round, and looking on his disciples, he rebuked Peter, saying, Get thee behind me, Satan, for thou understandest not the things of God, but the things of men.

Luke ix. (22) Saying, The Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be put to death, and raised again on the third day.

§ 190. (Matth. xvi. 21; Mark viii. 31; Luke ix. 22.) Jesus descended upon earth to offer men the strongest proof and the highest example of love and self-denial which was possible. It was needful to prepare his disciples for this important act of his mission, that it might be obvious to the

eyes of all, both then and in future, that the death and crucifixion of Jesus were foreseen, and not purely human events.

In speaking of his "death" and "resurrection," Christ expressed himself in terms that men could understand. He was to suffer the change of death under a corporeal human appearance, and then, independently of the fleshly body which he seemed to bear, he was to show himself to the eyes of men, to establish his identity. It was therefore needful that these men should be warned of the event beforehand in order to understand it, for even the disciples would not have understood the fact of the reappearance of Jesus among them, unless they had regarded it in the light of a "resurrection" in the sense in which they understood the word.

You must, however, take notice that the Hebrews looked upon the resurrection as the return of the spirit into a material body of flesh, but without considering whether it was always the same body. It returned to a material body; but they never inquired into its origin or its end. The disciples and the Hebrews, however, understood the resurrection which Jesus foretold to imply the return of the spirit to the same body. It was on this account that Jesus allowed Thomas to put his hand into his side, and his fingers into the wounds in his hands and feet; for his tangible perispritic body resumed the consistency and appearance of the human body. You have been informed of the nature of the body of Jesus, and know that he was always a spirit, even when clothed with this tangible perispirt, and submitting, for the needs of his earthly mission, to a visible presence among men. But there was neither death nor resurrection in the sense attached to those expressions, but simply appearances.

The sufferings endured by Jesus on the cross were wholly moral. The blood which flowed from the wounds was a fluidic compound, resembling blood. We are aware that these revelations will alarm many who lay great stress on the physical tortures of the Great Example who has been set before them; but they must nevertheless reconcile themselves to regarding Jesus as wholly a spirit, and superior to all others who aided in the formation and development of your

planet. Jesus was a pure spirit, who assumed a visible form to human eyes, but his sufferings were wholly moral, and were caused by his love for his pupils, and his sorrow at beholding them so hardened. He thus experienced the same suffering which is felt by a tender mother who is forced to punish a darling child.

As Christ existed in spiritual life, and was clothed by a tangible perispirit resembling the human body, the crucifixion and accompanying actions were fruitless in a physical point of view. This is self-evident, because his body was not composed of human matter, like that of the men of your planet. Could they have any effect upon a spirit who appeared in a visible and tangible condition ?

Reflect upon the sentiments by which Jesus was actuated, the mission which he came to fulfil, and the example which he set to mankind. He contented himself with pronouncing aloud the words which we shall explain further on, and which were summed up in his exclamation, "It is finished ; Lord, into thy hands I commend my spirit." He thus set men an example of the resignation, obedience, and submission with which they should bow to the decrees of their sovereign Master. The last exclamation of Jesus was not a cry of suffering ; for, when he appeared to men to yield up the ghost, he cried out to call their attention at the supreme moment, and to teach them by a cry of joy and not of agony, how great was the happiness of the spirit who frees himself from his gross envelope to rise towards his Creator.

Men have interpreted these different signs according to their personal sensations. They have reflected on what would be their own feelings under similar circumstances, and have attributed the same sensations to Christ ; for they saw only their material side, and believed him to possess a completely material body like their own. Jesus was a spirit, and therefore elevated above any physical and material sensations ; but most men say, "What merit would it be for him to submit to such tortures, if he did not experience physical suffering?" But they do not understand that the spiritual suffering of the spiritual essence is much sharper

and severer than any of your human sufferings can be to your body. Jesus suffered cruelly indeed, not in his flesh, but in his spirit. Every stroke of the hammer upon the nails which transpierced his tangible fluidic hands and feet, wounded his sensibility, and made his soul shed its most precious blood; the blood of the love and devotion which he felt for you.

O carnal-minded men who can see nothing beyond the convulsions of the flesh, have you never had to endure moral sufferings, to which you would have preferred all the tortures of the Inquisition? Has it not sometimes happened to those among you who are parents to behold the child of your love repay your tenderness and devotion by the blackest ingratitude, by neglect, ill treatment, and even crime? And if you had the choice of exchanging your moral sufferings for physical torture, no matter how severe, would you not gladly do so? Even so did Jesus suffer deeply on the Cross.

There is no difficulty in explaining the disappearance of the body from the tomb. Jesus permitted his tangible perispirit to remain as it had been taken down from the cross, and laid there by Joseph of Arimathea. It was in the tomb when the chief priests and Pharisees visited it, and after satisfying themselves of the presence of the body, sealed the tomb, and stationed guards over it; but after this, the tomb was empty. Jesus caused the body to lose its tangibility, and resume its ethereal fluidic appearance, which was invisible to human eyes, and quitted the tomb. You know that there are no bars or obstacles to the spirit; and while his free, pure spirit ascended into space, the elements of the fluidic body which was the instrument of his earthly mission, remained ready to reunite at his will, to represent him as "risen from the dead" to the eyes of men. It reappeared, under circumstances and conditions which we will explain hereafter, until the period which is called the "Ascension," when his earthly mission was completed, and he finally abandoned the perispiritic body which he had employed, and its constituent elements returned to the

several sources from whence they had been derived. He himself returned, a pure and perfect spirit, to the higher regions, to continue his spiritual mission as the protector and ruler of your planet. He is now accomplishing this mission among you by the Spirit of Truth, and by the New Revelation.

(Matth. xvi. 22, 23; Mark viii. 32, 33).—We must now explain the words spoken by Peter to Jesus when he predicted his sufferings, death, and resurrection; and the answer of Jesus. Peter was not always under medianimic influence, any more than your modern mediums, and his spirit acted independently, like yours. It was therefore the humanity of Peter which was moved with fear at the thought of losing his beloved Master. He was at this moment left to his own impulses, as was frequently the case; for the influence of the superior spirits who guided him was not always exerted. Was this not necessary to give scope for his free will, and can you imagine that his denial was caused by the inspiration of good spirits?

You should notice that he was left to himself while Jesus was near him to lead him back from his wanderings, and to teach him to distrust the weakness of the flesh. His human mission had not yet begun; he was like a pupil trying his powers under the eyes of his master, and not always able to use them perfectly; but as soon as the mission of Christ was ended on earth, that of Peter and the other disciples began. Then, too, began the incessant watchfulness of the superior spirits who were commissioned to guide them as far as was necessary.

As regards the severe reply of Jesus, every incarnate spirit is necessarily fallible, and Jesus desired to put Peter on his guard against the human weakness which always results in choosing the things of men in preference to those of God. The expression *Satan* which he applied to Peter was purely figurative, and only meant evil influence. Peter sought to turn his Master aside from his duty; and thus personified evil inspiration. In replying to Peter, Jesus thought of both the present and the future. He wished to remind all who

should hear his words, that the will of the Lord is above every other consideration, and that we must all, whether incarnate or not, bow with reverence, love, and submission before his holy laws. Therefore beware of human weaknesses, and may you all unite in holy communion of thought. Confess yourselves sincerely to one another ; that is, exhort each other, that you may be mutually strengthened and enlightened, acknowledging your weaknesses, and examining into your most secret thoughts. Be ye therefore meek and humble of heart, with that engaging gentleness which leads the offender to seek for pardon. Be ye humble-minded with that deep and earnest humility which humbles itself in presence of its brethren, and loves to receive advice from whatever quarter it comes, never esteeming itself above others on account of gold, social position, intelligence, or virtues, but on the contrary seeks rather to hide its worth from the eyes of others, that it may not alarm or offend them. Be ye submissive to the will of your Father, with that grateful submission which joyfully receives the experiences which he sends you, whatever they may be. Be ye as patient as Job, and even more so ; never allow a murmur to shape itself in the depths of your heart, and let your lips and soul be always ready to bless the Lord in all his dispensations. O men, whosoever you are, and you especially who have received the blessed light of Spiritism, never weep, except for gratitude. Such are the only tears which Faith should shed. Go in peace, explore your hearts, and let their inmost depths be always laid open before the Lord.

§ 191. Did Jesus, in replying to Peter, allude in thought to those who should undertake to continue the work of the disciples, but who have misrepresented the object of the sublime morality of the Master, and did he also allude to the present opponents of the New Revelation ?

Yes, you are aware that Jesus possessed prescience of the various phases and conditions of future progress ; and all his sayings bore reference both to the present and the future.

MATTHEW, CHAP. XVI.—VERSES 24-28.

MARK, CHAP. VIII.—VERSES 34-38 ; IX. 1.

LUKE, CHAP. IX.—VERSES 23-27.

The Kingdom of God.

Matth. xvi. (24) Then Jesus said to his disciples, If any one wishes to come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. (25) For whoever wishes to save his life, shall lose it, and whoever shall lose his life on account of me, shall find it. (26) For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own life ; and what exchange shall a man give for his life ? (27) For the Son of Man is about to come in the glory of his Father with his angels, and then will he render to each according to his works. (28) Verily, I say unto you, There are some standing here who shall not experience death, until they shall see the Son of Man coming into his kingdom.

Mark viii. (34) And calling to him the crowd with his disciples, he said to them, Whosoever wishes to follow me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. (35) For whoever wishes to save his life, shall lose it, and whoever shall lose his life on account of me and of the Gospel, he shall save it. (36) For what shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his life ? (37) Or what shall a man give in exchange for his life ? (38) For whoever shall be ashamed of me and of my sayings in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him shall also the Son of Man be ashamed, when he shall come in the glory of his Father with the holy angels. (ix. 1) And he said to them, Verily I say unto you, There are some standing here who shall not taste death until they shall see the kingdom of God come with power.

Luke ix. (23) And he said to them all, If any man wishes to follow me, let him deny himself and take up his cross day by day, and follow me. (24) For whosoever wishes to save his life shall lose it, and whoever shall lose his life on account of me, this man shall save it. (25) For what shall it profit a man if he should gain the whole world, and he himself should be destroyed or injured ? (26) For whosoever shall be ashamed of me and my words, of him shall the Son of Man be ashamed when he shall come in the glory of himself and his Father and the holy angels. (27) And I tell you truly, There are some standing here who shall not experience death until they shall see the kingdom of God.

§ 192. You can understand this, for you are aware that absolute devotion and unreserved submission are the only conditions which can lead you to the relative perfection which humanity is able to attain. Jesus does not insist too strongly on this subject, and you should never lose sight of it.

As regards the promise which he made to his disciples, affirming that that generation would not pass away until

they had seen these things, and that some would not die until then, it is necessary for you to know in what sense his words should be understood. How do the professors of Theology interpret them? Are they figurative; and if so, what are they intended to indicate?

Are they to be understood literally? If so, how can you show that the words of Jesus were true, and that they were fulfilled?

You who accept the revelation of the Spirit of Truth may understand these words in the true sense which is spiritually revealed to you. They apply to the race of spirits who were incarnate at that period, and who would remain on earth, by successive reincarnations, until the time when the kingdom of God shall be really established on earth, and the Son of Man shall appear in his glory to men whose eyes have become pure enough to endure his spiritual radiance. The expression, "They shall not taste of death," was used to render the subject intelligible to those to whom he spoke, who could not understand the law of re-birth in its full extent; but most of the spirits of whom Jesus spoke will then be purified, and reincarnated in earth on missions.

The Master's expressions were veiled by the letter, and were thus rendered appropriate to the age and to the intelligence of those whom he desired to impress. When man abandons himself wholly to material pleasures, he sinks into the state of those who lose their life for the goods of this world, or who "sell their soul to the demon," a phrase which is used so often without being properly understood. It is not necessary to sign a compact in blood with "the angel of darkness" (that is, with the evil spirits); and thus to lose your soul, but only to give yourself up to the material instincts of humanity more than is needful; for by so doing you degrade yourselves below the level of the brutes which you despise, and which, being guided by an instinct which you also possess, never exceed the limits fixed for them by the necessities of their existence.

Man is not his own master. His corporeal human existence is a trust which he receives from the Lord, and is the

appointed means granted him to purify himself, and to rise more rapidly. Man should not be more attached to his body than to a treasure which he has amassed with great labour; for neither the one nor the other will accompany him to the other world, or be of use to him there, although on this earth of trials both are a means of proving him, and of giving him the opportunity of fulfilling his obligations towards God by gratitude, towards his friends by charity, and towards himself by disinterestedness and the good use which he can make of them. But you ought not to be exclusively and personally attached either to your body or to your treasure. Use both as a means of being useful to your brethren; strive to do everything for their good, without any selfish thought of the trouble and inconvenience which may be caused to yourself by the labours which your body enables you to perform for the good of your brethren, any more than you should consider the privations to which you may be subjected when you use your money for their benefit. But yet you should not use either extravagantly, but wisely; and everything in the course of your life should be regulated by the great control of a reason enlightened by the torch of love and truth. If you consult your reason seriously, it will always point you to the straight, safe, and sure path.

You should consider that it will avail a man nothing to make all the sacrifices in the world, if his life is not conformable to the will of God. What will it avail a man to submit to all the privations and penances imposed by a deceptive ritual, with his own personal benefit in view, if he is wanting in charity towards his brethren and in gratitude towards his God? if selfishness alone has urged him to save his soul, and if his object is not to please God with the efforts which he makes to act rightly? When he is influenced by such selfishness, does he not resemble a child who has been promised a reward if he learns his lessons well, and who applies himself to them with all his might, taking neither rest nor refreshment till he lays his hand on the promised reward, but who would disregard the love and

satisfaction of his father, and sink again into idleness or indifference if there was no prize, or if he was doubtful of obtaining it?

O men, take no thought for your body beyond what is necessary, neither regard your souls from a selfish point of view, but regard your bodies as instruments which you should care for, in order that they may longer serve the necessities of the common cause, and let your object under all circumstances be the common good of your brethren, both in material, moral, and intellectual order, that you may please your God.

Never ask yourselves what progress you have made towards eternal happiness, but ask rather what joy you may have given to the tender Father who watches over all your thoughts and actions, and who rejoices to see the growth of the seeds of truth and love which he has implanted in you. O let all your thoughts and actions be guided by gratitude towards your God and by love towards your brethren, but never permit any feeling of selfishness or personal interest to stain the purity of your consciences.

(Mark viii. 38; Matth. xvi. 27).—These words of the Master relate to the past, the present, and the future. They refer especially to those who have known the truth, but have suppressed or hidden their convictions from regard to men. We do not now blame men whose social position compels them unwillingly to hide their secret thoughts for a time. They also ought to disseminate the truth, but with prudence and moderation, for they would often compromise the success of their enterprise by compromising their material existence. We speak rather of those who fear ridicule and who dare not offend the prejudices of their companions, and conform to them, laughing and mocking with the scornors, fearing lest it should be said, "You are also one of them." But Jesus will turn to them as he turned to Peter, and when they understand, the mischief will be done, and expiation will follow. Just as Peter perceived his errors and wept, so will those who have rejected Jesus from fear of man understand and expiate their error, for in their case it will

not be a temporary weakness of the flesh, but a prolonged act of the will ; and the expiation will be proportioned to the duration of their fault.

Those who have been ashamed of Jesus, from his appearance on earth till your own days, he also has been ashamed of. They have first expiated their offences and have then been allowed to reincarnate themselves, and have thus formed part of the generations of spirits who have succeeded each other on your earth. The darnel must continue to grow on earth, that it may endeavour to become good corn by reincarnation, reparation, and progress.

In your days also the fear of men will continue to exist and to produce the same effects, and men will expiate the same offence, but they will not die, for they will still be allowed to reincarnate themselves on earth, and the darnel will still continue to grow by the side of the good corn.

Jesus will still be ashamed of those who are ashamed of him, until the separation of the darnel from the good corn shall be finished. After this, he will come into his kingdom in his own glory and in that of his Father and of the holy angels, who are the spirits who will then surround him, and who aided him in his mission and laboured at the progress of your planet, upon which the Kingdom of God will then be established with power. Then, too, all those spirits who have remained guilty and rebellious until that time will be dead to your planet, for they will no longer be permitted to reincarnate themselves upon it, but will be banished to the inferior planets, where their expiation will be proportioned to their fault, as is necessary for their moral improvement and progress.

Then, too, Jesus will render to each according to his works. You will be purified, and will have progressed, but you will not all have arrived at the same point of perfection. Otherwise what would be the use of judgment, the separation of the darnel from the good corn for expiation, or the preliminary purification ?

MATTHEW, CHAP. XVII.—VERSES 1-9. MARK,
CHAP. IX.—VERSES 2-10. LUKE, CHAP. IX.—
VERSES 28-36.

Transfiguration of Jesus.

Matth. xvii. (1) And after six days, Jesus takes Peter and James and John his brother, and brings them up into a high mountain, alone. (2) And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his garments were radiant as light. (3) And lo, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, conversing with him, (4) And Peter answered and said to Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here; if thou wilt, let us pitch three tents here, one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah. (5) While he was still speaking, behold a bright cloud overshadowed them, and lo, a voice from the cloud, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him. (6) And when the disciples heard it, they fell on their faces, and feared exceedingly. (7) And Jesus came and touched them, and said, Rise up, and fear not. (8) And when they raised their eyes they saw no one, save Jesus only. (9) And while they were descending the mountain, Jesus commanded them, saying, Tell no one the vision till the Son of Man is risen from the dead.

Mark ix. (2) And after six days, Jesus takes Peter and James and John, and takes them up into a high mountain by themselves alone, and he was transfigured before them. (3) And his garments became shining, white exceedingly, like snow, such as no fuller on earth could whiten them. (4) And there appeared to them Moses and Elijah, and they were conversing with Jesus. (5) And Peter answered and said to Jesus, Rabbi, it is good for us to be here, and we will pitch three tents, one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah. (6) For he knew not what to say, for they were affrighted. (7) And there was a cloud overshadowing them, and a voice came from the cloud, saying, This is my beloved Son; hear ye him. (8) And looking round suddenly, they saw no one, but Jesus alone with themselves. (9) And as they were descending the mountain, he commanded them not to tell any one what they had seen, until the Son of Man should have arisen from the dead. (10) And they kept the saying to themselves, inquiring what the rising from the dead might be.

Luke ix. (28) And it was about eight days after these sayings that he took Peter and John and James, and went up into the mountain to pray. (29) And it came to pass that while he was praying, the appearance of his face became altered, and his clothing became brilliant. (30) And behold two men were conversing with him, who were Moses and Elijah, (31) Who appeared in glory, and spoke of his departure, which he should accomplish at Jerusalem. (32) And Peter and those with him were heavy with sleep; but having awakened, they saw his glory and the two men who were standing with him. (33) And it came to pass that as they were departing from him, Peter said to Jesus, Master, it is good for us to be here, and we will pitch three tents, one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah; not knowing what he said. (34) And while he was thus speaking, a cloud came and overshadowed them and they feared as they entered into the cloud. (35) And a voice came

from the cloud, saying, This is my beloved Son ; hear ye him. (36) And when the voice came, they found Jesus alone ; and they kept silence, and told no one in those days of what they had seen.

§ 192. When Jesus said to his disciples, " And whom say ye that I am ? " Peter, who had been for some time under the influence of medianimic inspiration, replied, " Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God ; " and Jesus responded, " It is not you that speak, but my Father who speaketh in you."

The vision which Peter and James and John beheld on the mountain was a powerful spirit-manifestation, designed to display the spiritual elevation of Jesus, to confirm his mission as the Christ, the Son of the Living God, and to give promises of the future, under a veil which was afterwards to be raised by the New Revelation. When Jesus reassumed for a moment the attributes of his nature in the eyes of his disciples (although veiled, since otherwise they would not have been able to endure the splendour) he gave them some idea of his own elevation, and of the glory of the life to which they aspired.

The presence of Moses and Elijah in a form visible to the disciples was designed to impress their imagination, and to confirm the spiritual elevation of Christ as the promised Messiah. Moses and Elijah had both foretold the coming of the Messiah, and their presence brought the mission of Jesus before the eyes of his disciples in all its sanctity. The words spoken from the cloud affirmed, in the name of the Omnipotent Father, the mission of Jesus as the Christ, the Son of the Living God, the promised Messiah. With reference to the future (that is, to your present age, which inaugurates the new era of the Christianity of Christ), the presence of Moses and Elijah sanctifies the intervention of spirits in human affairs. Jesus promised that his law should extend over the whole earth, and that all men should be gathered together under the flag which his disciples should unfurl. They could understand that the length of human life was quite insufficient for the completion of the task ; and the presence of Moses and Elijah, who had also

laboured for the regeneration of humanity, taught the Apostles how they might continue the work which they had undertaken.

Jesus likewise included in himself the promises of the future. Just as Moses and Elijah had promised the Messiah, so did Jesus promise another Comforter, even the Spirit of Truth, by the intervention of the spirits of the Lord in human affairs, which was rendered lawful to all by the presence of Moses and Elijah on the mountain. They appeared to the disciples conversing with the transfigured Jesus, to show men the glory for which the Spiritual Revelation should prepare the way.

The three Evangelists related the same events under medianimic influence. The narratives reflect the human impressions, ideas, and interpretations of the three disciples, each of whom related his own sensations; and therefore each of the Evangelists recorded what he had been told.

Peter, James, and John kept the event secret, as Jesus had commanded, till after the close of the earthly mission of the Master. Their narratives were subsequently revealed and promulgated, and reflected the sensations and ideas of each of the witnesses. When the three narratives are collated, they reproduce the events as the disciples beheld and understood them.

We will explain the events in order, according to spiritual science.

(Matth. xvii. 1.)—Jesus chose Peter and James and John, because their physical constitution was best fitted to receive the spirit-manifestation which was about to take place. God never leaves anything to "chance;" and everything relating to the earthly mission of the Master was foreseen and prepared for. It was part of the mission of Peter and James and John to witness the events which took place on the mountain; and they were incarnated under conditions which fitted them for everything which was to take place during their mission.

(Luke ix. 32.)—The Apostles were not in a state of ordinary natural sleep, but in a state of drowsiness, such as

mediums experience at the time of a powerful manifestation. They were surrounded by fluids emanating from the spirits who were preparing to open their eyes. Peter alone was naturally clairvoyant; and the two others were less developed, and needed to be prepared by magnetico-spiritual influence, to behold the manifestation with the eyes of their spirit. This portion of the narrative was derived from the account which James and John gave of their own sensations, and which was related by the Evangelist according to what he had been told. When they awoke, their spiritual sight was opened, and they were enabled to see the spirits of Jesus, Moses, and Elijah, who immediately became visible to them, and the manifestation took place.

(Matth. xvii. 2 ; Mark ix. 3.)—The Apostles were ignorant of the causes and effects of what they witnessed ; and Jesus resembled a man who casts aside the cloak in which he is muffled ; for he laid aside for the time the bodily human envelope in which they usually beheld him, as well as the human garments which covered it. Jesus caused these to become invisible to men, whenever he returned to the superior regions, and it would have been equally easy for him to cause his perispritic body to become intangible, and then to attract to it the fluids necessary to cause it to appear to the three disciples under the form which he desired them to behold, and afterwards to resume his human appearance and dress, while the cloud covered the disciples, who had fallen on their faces when Moses and Elijah appeared to them. But nothing takes place without a purpose ; and what would have been the object and necessity for all this ?

In order to effect his transfiguration, Jesus drew to himself, by the action of his powerful will, the fluids necessary to produce the effects. He enveloped his tangible perisprit and human dress in these fluids, which took the form and appearance which he desired his disciples to behold. But you should understand that when Jesus transfigured himself before the disciples, he placed himself within their comprehension. His tangible perisprit, which appeared to them like a human body, disappeared from their

eyes ; and it was as if he had laid aside one dress to put on another. Jesus wore clothes which could not dissolve and become fluidically luminous, like a tangible perisprit ; but he surrounded them with luminous fluids which would not dazzle the human eyes of the disciples, and yet gave them some idea of the glory to which they aspired.

The face of Jesus appeared to them to shine like the sun ; but only in its radiance. They could not bear the lustre, and therefore compared it to the light of the sun, which compels you to lower your eyes ; but Jesus did not appear in the full radiance of his spiritual splendour. He was, as it were, robed in fluids which were luminous to human eyes, but very dim as compared to himself. The brilliant radiance and snow-like whiteness which the garments of Jesus assumed was caused by the fluids which enveloped them. It was a fluidic compound which took the appearance of the robes in which all spirits who assume a bodily appearance are clothed.

Jesus partially resumed the attributes of his real nature to the eyes of his disciples. Do you not know that the greater the elevation of any spirit, the more luminous it appears to human eyes ? There is nothing more remarkable to us or to any elevated spirits in this luminous emanation than you behold in a more or less beautiful form or figure. It merely enables us to judge of the elevation of the spirits around us, just as the complexion of a man enables you to perceive whether he was born amid the snows of the north, or amid the sands of the desert. The higher the spirit, the lighter, whiter, and brighter do these emanations become.

The conditions and planetary progress of the worlds always correspond with the state of the spirits who inhabit them. There are so many degrees among both the material and spiritual worlds that they cannot be classified, for the material worlds gradually pass from the material to the fluidic state ; and the spiritual worlds also pass from the fluidic state to one yet more purely fluidic.

The purer the worlds become, the more colourless becomes the light around them by insensible gradations. It passes

from red to blue and white by intermediate gradations of colours which you can understand by looking at an artist's palette.* Do you not behold flames which are fed by a material substance assume various shades of colour, and appear as it were material, while those fed by a gas are lighter and whiter? It follows naturally that the more elevated the planet, the whiter and brighter is its light. Those spiritual worlds, which you call celestial, which have arrived at a purely fluidic condition, and which are inhabited solely by good spirits, are those which radiate the whitest and brightest light in the hierarchy of worlds. There is also a hierarchy among the pure spirits who are equal in purity as regards their moral perfection (compare § 60), with reference to universal knowledge. All are drawing nearer to God throughout eternity, but without ever being able to equal Him, the Eternal and Infinite, who is so ethereal, and so resplendent and dazzling with whiteness and light that none among the most elevated of the pure spirits can look upon him or endure his lustre, when he approaches the Fire of Omnipotence to receive the inspiration of the will of the Sovereign Master, the Father of all which exists.

The rainbow which God pointed out to the Hebrews through Moses as the emblem of the perpetual compact between God and all the creatures living upon earth, is, spiritually interpreted, the emblem of the progress of all worlds and of all spiritual essences, in friendship and union, in all the kingdoms of nature, whether material or incarnated in a material or fluidic state, or perispiritically incorporated, or errant throughout space. It likewise symbolizes the uniform and ascending course of all the worlds and of all the spiritual essences of every degree. You must not forget that the Hebrews regarded the earth as the whole of Creation, the heavens and the firmament being only a necessary adjunct.

The phenomenon of the transfiguration of Jesus was not so great a prodigy as you imagine, as a physical effect. Have

* The suns and planets are of different colours.—TRANSL.

we not already told you that he did not appear in all his glory, but was robed in fluids which were luminous to men, but very dark as regarded himself? This faculty belongs to all the elevated spirits, who can produce these phenomena under conditions corresponding to their degree of elevation. We and all others of our class can attain the same end when it is necessary and permitted. We can render ourselves first visible and tangible in a human form, and can then transfigure ourselves by gathering round us the needful luminous fluids, rendered visible to the eyes of men ; but these fluids are always inferior to those corresponding to our spiritual elevation. You know that the phenomenon of transfiguration can also be accomplished in humanity ; but this transfiguration has no resemblance to that accomplished by Jesus or by other elevated spirits. We shall give you further explanations presently.

(Luke ix. 31.)—Moses and Elijah became visible to the Apostles in glory, because, though presenting a human appearance, they were luminous, like the superior spirits. The disciples required no inspiration to recognize Moses and Elijah, like that received by Peter when he answered the question of Jesus, "Whom say ye that I am?"

They saw them, and that was sufficient ; Moses appeared with the sign which he showed to the Hebrews, the two flames on the head, recorded by tradition, and the Apostles recognized him by this sign. You will remember the tradition that when Elijah was taken up to heaven, he left his mantle with Elisha, his disciple and his successor in Israel. But you do not know that the Jews never appeared in public on a solemn occasion or in the holy place without being covered with their mantle, and Elijah appeared by the side of Moses without a mantle. They understood this ; for, as you know, Peter and his companions were advanced spirits, whose intelligence, though obscured by the flesh, sometimes dominated over it.

(Luke ix. 31.)—The conversation and its subject were a human idea founded on comments relative to the presence of Moses and Elijah, who appeared to be conversing with

Jesus ; and also on the words of Jesus, "Until the Son of Man shall have risen from the dead." The Evangelists were medianimically inspired to record what they had heard from the three disciples, each of whom related his own sensations ; and according to the account which reached Luke, Moses and Elijah appeared in glory, and Jesus received the needful instructions from them. Jesus, who foresaw the future, had already predicted his coming to Jerusalem, and his death and resurrection ; and there was no occasion for Moses and Elijah to inform him of it. After the manifestation was over, the disciples were still so confused that they asked each other what Jesus meant by saying, "Till the Son of Man shall have risen from the dead."

There was nothing extraordinary in the appearance of Moses and Elijah. They and many other more elevated spirits were always near the Master, and awaiting his commands, as they are still, though invisible to human eyes. They alone made themselves visible because they had both predicted the Messiah, and their presence only was necessary in accordance with the traditions of the Hebrews, to accomplish the object of the manifestation. As they were departing, Peter said to Jesus, "Master, it is good for us to be here ; let us pitch three tents, one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah ; not knowing what he said, for they were afraid." Peter's proposal to pitch three tents likewise arose from Hebrew errors. Peter thought he saw Moses and Elijah raised from the dead in fleshly bodies, and wished them to remain near his beloved Master. He was confused ; and you may suppose that this manifestation did not last very long. It appeared to the disciples that Moses and Elijah were going away, when Peter proposed to pitch the tents. They received this impression, owing to their error in supposing that they appeared in fleshly bodies ; being ignorant of spiritual phenomena. Moses and Elijah did not actually depart, but they began to disappear from the eyes of the Apostles, whose power of beholding them was lessened. They became invisible ; but

it appeared to the disciples as if they were lost in the distance.

(Matth. xvii. 5-8; Luke ix. 34, 35).—The luminous cloud which covered the disciples was only the surrounding fluids, which became visible to them. We have already explained this in speaking of the light which surrounded the shepherds. When Jesus touched the disciples, and said, "Rise up, and fear not," Moses and Elijah had already become invisible to their eyes. Peter, James and John were released from the medianimic influence, and returned to corporeal human life; upon which they saw no one but Jesus, who had caused the phenomena to cease, by dispelling the fluids which he had attracted, and which had now become colourless and invisible to human eyes. He was then alone, as he had been when he had ascended the mountain with them; for he returned to the ordinary human appearance which he always assumed when his visible presence among men was necessary for the requirements of his mission.

(Mark ix. 8, 9).—Do not be surprised that the Apostles asked each other what Jesus meant by saying, "Till the Son of Man has risen from the dead." They did not understand it; the doctrine of Reincarnation had become a superstition, though they still believed it. They could understand that a soul might inhabit a new body after centuries had passed, as the soul of the prophet Elijah had come to animate the body of John the Baptist; but they could not understand how Jesus could immediately commence a new existence in the same body. They supposed that the reappearance of the soul must needs take place in matter; for on the one hand, Jesus appeared to them to be clothed with a body like their own, subject to human death, and which could only resume its existence by the return of the spirit into the corpse; which was what they understood by the word "resurrection;" and on the other hand, they knew nothing of the perispritic nature of the body of Jesus, or of the possible combinations and tangibility of the perisprit.

Jesus forbade his disciples to speak to anyone of what had happened, until he had arisen from the dead, because

if they had done so before that event, they would not have been believed ; and because their testimony as to what they had seen on the mountain, would afterwards be accepted by those who had come to look upon Jesus as a man clothed with a material human body, mortal and perishable like their own ; and also as the Son of God miraculously incarnated.

We must now explain the phenomenon of the transfiguration of a human being ; but you must remember that this has nothing to do with the transfiguration of Jesus, or of the superior spirits. Man alone cannot produce this phenomenon, but needs the aid of his brethren in the errant state. It can take place either with or without his will and knowledge. When it is produced by the voluntary action of the incarnate spirit, his will summons those whose aid he needs. He has no need to evoke them, for his desire to transfigure himself is sufficient to attract sympathetic spirits, if a sufficiently important object is to be attained. When the phenomenon takes place without the will or knowledge of the incarnate spirit, he is only an instrument in the hands of the spirits who produce it. He is often their unconscious instrument, especially if he knows nothing of spiritual science, or of the causes and effects of such a phenomenon.

Transfiguration is generally effected by the mutual action of the subject and of the spirits, which results in a blending of their perisprits and a combination of their fluids. The operating spirit mingles his perispirit with that of the subject, and enveloping him with their combined fluids, gives him the appearance which he desires him to assume. The subject is surrounded with fluids which he can neither see nor feel, which cause him to assume the appearance which he is to present to the eyes of the beholders. The fluids conceal the presence of the subject, and you see only what the spirits desire to show you.

We have said that the subject neither sees nor feels the fluids. In this case, some of the incarnate spirits who are subjected to the influences which produce the phenomenon are in a condition analogous to the magnetic or somnambulic state. Others who are mediums feel the influence

which compels them to turn their eyes in one direction or the other, without being aware of the change in their appearance, feeling that they are acting independently of their own will and faculties, but without perceiving the agency which envelopes them and effects their transformation, any more than the psychographic medium who feels a slight influence move his arm perceives the form which moves it, unless he is a seeing medium ; and even then he perceives nothing unless the spirit desires to render himself visible to him.

This appearance is visible and tangible to the bystanders, but not to the subject, unless he perceives it accidentally. If he is brought before a mirror, he can see it with his own eyes ; but such experiments are of little use. The spirit who effects the phenomenon of transfiguration can not only render all the appearances which he desires to show visible and tangible, but can also give his subject the features, air, tone of voice, and even the turns of expression of the person whose corporeal appearance he thus reproduces. The spirit avails himself of the aspect, voice, and limbs of the incarnate spirit who serves him as his instrument, to speak or act in whatever manner he requires ; and, if necessary, the spirits combine their efforts to attain the desired end ; but it is requisite that the subject should be predisposed to various forms of mediumship, which is rare, especially at the present day ; but in future, these faculties will be better developed in men. In such a case, the illusion is so complete that the bystanders believe they really see and hear the person whom the transfiguration is designed to simulate. The operating spirit can also, if necessary (with the concurrence of other spirits, and by availing himself of the needful conditions) cause his subject to assume the form and appearance of a dead person, with all his peculiarities, so that the bystanders believe they see the man himself before them.

Whatever appearance is given to the transfigured subject (whether that of a larger or stouter person, or that of a young child), his natural weight appears to you to remain

the same, *provided* that there is no concurrence of spirits, and that the appearance only is changed. It is only by the concurrence of spirits that the weight varies more or less.* If the change is only apparent, the amount of the matter of the body is neither increased nor diminished. Increase or diminution of the natural weight can only take place by the addition of the perispit of the spirit or spirits who communicate, or of the fluids which surround the subject, and effect his transfiguration. But the fluids by which we act, though ponderable to us, are imponderable to you at present; they are as imponderable to you as the air was to your ancestors before they had invented the needful instruments to weigh it. The air was always of the same density; but your ancestors could not weigh it, and supposed it to be an essence without weight or bulk. It is the same with you at present, as regards the fluids by which we effect transfiguration.

The universal fluid is a compound of various fluids forming but one in the mass; but we draw from it such portions as we require. It takes the desired direction, or connects itself with the whole, according to circumstances. The various fluids are ponderable to us in the universal fluid, and in those which result from subtractions or combinations effected by spirit-agency. Everything is ponderable in nature, which is a general term for all the organic and inorganic creations, both from a fluidic and material point of view.

The various fluids, of which the universal fluid is composed, will only be recognised as ponderable (like the air, which you can now weigh), by means of instruments and methods which will long remain unknown. But you will finally succeed in this, and what you now regard as great mysteries will become plain when you understand the nature and properties of the fluids around you. But, for this purpose, man must learn to raise himself into aerial

* I believe this passage was published before any experiments in weighing mediums in cases of so-called "materialization" had been attempted.—TRANSL.

regions, which are still as unknown to him as are distant seas to the peasant who has never left his hut.

Moral purification and intellectual progress will both assist you to ascend, for the former will attract more powerful aid ; and you will be better able to understand, without abusing your knowledge, which will then become easy to you, and you will learn more, and raise yourselves more speedily.

It is only by the agency of spirits that the natural weight of the subject can be increased or diminished. This phenomenon is the result of the united spiritual and fluidic action of several spirits, for it cannot be effected by one alone. To increase or diminish the weight of a transfigured subject, the spirits around employ the same means by which they can fix a light table to the ground, or lift a considerable weight like a feather. When they give the subject the appearance of a larger and heavier person, they increase the density of the fluids, when necessary, to the point required to produce the difference between the weight of the person represented, and that of the subject. But when they give a tall and stout person the appearance of a little child, they diminish his weight by upholding the transfigured subject, until his weight is proportioned to his size. In this case, the moment that there is any spiritual action, the weight varies in conformity with the appearance, provided that it is necessary ; for you can understand that, if necessary, the spirits could increase the weight, when a tall robust man took the appearance of a young child, or could diminish it when a young child took the appearance of a tall, strong man.

To effect such transfigurations, the operating spirit cannot act alone, if he is but little elevated ; if, for instance, he is of your own level, or not much above you. Spirits avail themselves of the elements of medianimity which they meet with, just as the combination of analogous perisprits is necessary to produce noises, and other physical effects ; and the subject must likewise possess the physical aptitudes necessary for transfiguration, and for the effects which are to be produced. It is impossible for you to understand

these subjects at present, for they relate to the combinations of perispritic fluids, and belong to a class of ideas still far above you. The time has not yet come for you to enter upon this study. Except as regards the concurrence of the perisprit, the spirit is the sole agent, as you may perceive.

When more elevated spirits desire to transfigure a human being, they can dispense with his physical susceptibility, although they prefer suitable conditions. When the incarnate spirit does not possess the necessary physical susceptibility, we envelop him with fluids which form, as it were, a covering which we throw over him to give him the appearance which we desire. We can thus, by means of luminous fluids rendered visible to men, present the subject under a luminous form. We can change his appearance, and present him to their eyes in such a form as may be required to impress their imaginations. Thus, incarnate spirits may be raised, as transfigured subjects, not to so elevated a point as that which Jesus assumed before the eyes of the disciples, but to a state resembling it, if their moral and physical dispositions are suitable. If it is necessary to produce a striking effect upon the imagination, we can even employ an unworthy subject who possesses the physical susceptibility required; just as you use an imperfect tool till you find a good one, in which case you prefer to employ that which is most useful. Even so, we abandon the instrument which only possesses material qualities (that is, physical susceptibilities) when we meet with a good instrument possessing both the necessary physical and moral dispositions. We are always ready to endeavour to remedy what is physically wanting in an incarnate spirit who fulfils the desired moral conditions; but how few are there among you who possess faith, elevation of mind, self-renunciation, and charity, to a sufficient extent to attract us to you thus! Such cases of transfiguration are still more uncommon than those produced by spirits of your own level, or a little above you; and even these latter are themselves very rare indeed.

MATTHEW, CHAP. XVII.—VERSES 10-13. MARK,
CHAP. IX.—VERSES 11-13.

The Spirit of Elijah reincarnated as John the Baptist.

Matth. xvii. (10) And the disciples asked him, saying, Wherefore say the Scribes that Elijah must first come? (11) And Jesus answered and said to them, Elijah indeed cometh first, and shall restore all things; (12) But I say unto you that Elijah has come already, and they have not recognized him, but have done unto him whatsoever they desired; and thus must the Son of Man suffer at their hands. (13) Then the disciples understood that he spoke to them of John the Baptist.

Mark ix. (11) And they asked him, saying, Why say the Scribes that Elijah must first come? (12) And he answered and said to them, Elijah indeed cometh first, and shall restore all things; and how it is written of the Son of Man that he shall suffer many things, and be set at nought. (13) But I say unto you that Elijah has indeed come, and they have done unto him whatsoever they desired, as it was written of him.

§ 193. You should understand the object of these words of Jesus. By directing the attention of his disciples to the return of Elijah in the person of John the Baptist, Jesus laid the foundation of the spiritual revelation of the law of reincarnation which he was about to make, under a veil, in his interview with Nicodemus; and which was to be fully unfolded to men at the appointed time. This was the corner-stone which Jesus carved to support the building of the future.

Although the Master's words were of but little importance to the Apostles, and to succeeding generations until your own age, under the dominion of the letter, they will exert a great influence in future under the dominion of the Spirit. For the present, they only served to confirm the prophecies in the ancient books. The Apostles had no need to lay stress upon reincarnation. Although not part of the Hebrew Law, it was nevertheless believed by the majority. It is true that sceptics had already called it in question by ridiculing it, and treating it as a superstition, as they have always done, both before and after the time of Jesus. They have hidden the light under a bushel, lest its brightness should reveal to all what some would desire to conceal. Jesus revived this old belief by asserting that Elijah had risen again in the person of John the Baptist, and thus

proclaimed to all the natural and immutable law of rebirth, of which the reincarnation of Elijah was only an example and application among you of the general order of nature in the human kingdom.

Do not wonder that the disciples asked Jesus, "Wherefore say the Pharisees that Elijah must first come?" You must remember that all who were then disciples of Jesus, belonged to the lowest grades of society. Should you be surprised if one of your artisans who could not read, and knew nothing of the sacred writings but a few unmeaning words quoted in the Catechism, were to ask you such a question? Theological science was in those days what it is now; a light hidden under a bushel, lest the multitude should become sufficiently enlightened to perceive how fearfully the Scriptures have been perverted and disfigured by human interpretations. Jesus said that the Scribes and Pharisees had not recognized John. They did not understand that he who preached repentance and the advent of the Reformer was the Elijah promised in the Old Testament. The disciples understood that Jesus spoke to them of John, because his words fixed their attention upon the only man who appeared to them to fulfil the conditions of the promised Forerunner.

The tradition* appears, according to the letter, to contradict the words of Jesus, both as regards the return of Elijah to the earth, in the person of John the Baptist, as well as the incarnation of the spirit (or soul) of Elijah in the body of John. But when this tradition is explained in spirit and in truth, it confirms the words of the Master in every point.

Your reason and knowledge conflict with the letter, and know not how to seek for the spirit, and therefore reject what they cannot understand or explain. But the spirits of the Lord have come, in the name of the Spirit of Truth, to shed light on everything which remains obscure. According to the literal interpretation of the tradition, the bodily eyes of Elisha beheld Elijah carried away to heaven, incarnate and

* 2 Kings ii. 1-18.

living, in a chariot of fire. But how could Elijah be in heaven, where everything is eternally spiritual, if he was incarnated, and living a natural human life, subject to all the necessities of humanity? And even supposing this, how could his spirit (or soul) be reincarnated as John the Baptist?

Every thinking man at the present day feels that if this tradition was taken literally, it would stultify the words of Jesus, and lead to the most absurd and inadmissible consequences, both from a rational and scientific point of view. But the tradition does not represent the real facts as they actually took place. Both Elijah and Elisha were seeing, inspired, and hearing mediums, under spirit influence and action, according to the circumstances and necessities of their mission, and were thus instruments of the will of the Lord. Elijah was medianimically informed of the approaching termination of his earthly mission, and was inspired to take his disciple with him in order to prepare him for the revelation of which he was to be the instrument, and for his mission as a prophet among the Hebrews. But being ignorant of how far medianimity could be developed in Elisha, Elijah replied to his request that he might succeed him as the leader and shepherd of the flock of Israel: "If you see me, you shall receive what you ask," *i.e.* "If the medianimic faculty is developed in you, you shall see me when other men cannot, and this will be a sign that the Lord accepts you as my successor."

Lightning consumed the body of Elijah, and his spirit, clothed with the perispit which assumed the form of the body from which it had been instantaneously separated, rose in space towards the higher regions, visible to the seeing medianimity of Elisha, and then disappeared; even as the smoke rising from the chimney of a factory or an engine, is first visible to you, and then fades away until it becomes quite invisible.

"And it came to pass, as they still went on and talked, that behold there appeared a chariot of fire and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder, and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven; and Elisha saw it, and he cried, My father, my father, the chariot of Israel and the horses thereof. And he saw him no more."

Elisha received a medianimic vision under these conditions. The chariot and horses of fire represented the lightning which consumed the material body of Elijah, while his perispritic envelope rose up before his eyes of his attentive disciple. You know that the elements are a means which the spirits of the Lord frequently employ to accomplish events which his wisdom has decreed.

Do not wonder that the lightning appeared to the medianimic gaze of Elisha to present the appearance of a chariot and horses of fire. Does not lightning assume various forms, even to your own eyes? In this instance, Elisha saw what the spirits of the Lord desired him to see, because he was intended to believe that the chariot and horses of fire had carried away Elijah. You are aware that spirits can cause a medium to see what they desire by spiritual action on his brain, according to the appearances given to the fluidic combinations which are employed in medianimic vision. Nor should you be surprised that Elijah, who was an elevated spirit on a mission, should have perceived his condition at the very moment when his material body was consumed by lightning; and became visible to the medianimic gaze of Elisha under the human form from which he had just been separated. This cost him no effort; for you know that the perisprit preserves the impression and shape of the body which it has assumed, especially when it has just been separated from it. Under ordinary circumstances, this would have been simple medianimity on the part of Elisha; but even had it been otherwise, can you suppose that Elijah, an elevated spirit, prepared for his immediate separation from the body, would have needed time to recover himself? Do you not see that most of your brethren who are initiated into the New Revelation, recover their spiritual faculties almost instantaneously? The chariot and horses of fire appeared to Elisha to ascend like a whirlwind, or like a column of luminous vapours wreathing up like clouds driven by a storm.

Elisha, who lived in an age when the effects of lightning were unknown, had no idea of seeking for traces of the body

of Elijah, which moreover he would not have found. The attendant spirits turned his thoughts from any such intention by showing him Elijah ascending to heaven in a whirlwind. Thus, when the attendants asked to be allowed to go in search of his master, he answered, "Do not send;" but, nevertheless, they wished to search for him; and you are told that they did not find him. When they returned to Elisha, he said, "Did I did not tell you not to send?" The attendant spirits had concealed the traces of the body from all who sought for them. God, in his foresight and infinite wisdom, adapts events, actions, and revelations to the intelligence and requirements of every age and period, under the conditions required for the slow, but steady and always progressive, course of humanity.

The disciples understood from the answer of Jesus, that John the Baptist was Elijah, whom the prophets had announced as the Forerunner of Christ. Jesus could not then tell them, what we must now reveal to you, that Moses, Elijah, and John the Baptist were one and the same. We are commanded to reveal this, for the time has come when the "new alliance" must be accomplished, and when all men (Jews and Gentiles) must range themselves under the same faith: One God, single and indivisible, the uncreated and eternal Creator, who alone is eternal; the Father: Jesus Christ, your Protector, Ruler, and Master; the Son: and the Spirits of the Lord, pure, superior, and good spirits, who labour, under the direction of the Christ, at the progress of your planet and its humanity; the Holy Spirit.

Moses, Elijah, and John the Baptist are one and the same spirit, thrice incarnated on a mission; firstly, as Moses, who prepared for the coming of Christ, and announced him under a veil; secondly, reincarnated as Elijah, who threw great lustre upon the Hebrew traditions, and was announced by the prophets as the precursor of the Christ; thirdly, reincarnated as John, the son of Zacharias and Elizabeth, to be the promised Forerunner. These three figures were the emblem of the triple mission which was accomplished at three different periods, and which was brought within

human comprehension by the appearance of Moses and Elijah on Mount Tabor.

Jesus taught men that John the Baptist was Elijah returned to your earth. He was the same spirit by reincarnation, but not the same human personality, or earthly individuality. Consequently, at the time of the transfiguration of Jesus on Mount Tabor, a superior spirit of the same elevation as Elijah, or John, took the form and appearance of Moses. These substitutions are effected, when necessary, by spirits of the same order.

Reincarnation has long been forgotten. This was necessary, because a veil was needed between men who were filled with vices, follies, and superstitions ; and the mysteries of the other world, until the progress of humanity rendered it able to grasp and comprehend these mysteries, which were to be revealed to men by the spirits of the Lord, who should thus open to their gaze the paths of expiation, reparation, and progress for the spirit, which will conduct it to moral perfection, and thus to the fulfilment of its destiny, according to the infinite justice, goodness, and mercy of God.

Jesus, in his interview with Nicodemus, purposely left the subject of Reincarnation in obscurity, until the New Revelation should show it, shining through all his teachings, under the veil of the letter. Everything in the course of events has its object. To what abuses might not the known and voluntary contact of spirits with your humanity have led ! Even now, when your intelligence is more developed, and your minds are stronger and better instructed, look at the ridiculous practices of some, and the absurd confidence of others ; and yet ought you not to be ripe, since the time of harvest is approaching ?

Judge for yourselves, by the vagaries of so many Spiritists, what would have been the consequence in former times ! It is true that spiritual influence likewise existed then, but under circumstances very different from those of to-day. The ignorant and guilty spirits of your earth, when in the spiritual (that is, the errant) state, were generally kept in ignorance of their power of communicating with men. Those :

only who were comparatively elevated and disengaged from matter were able to employ this faculty of communication, which all now make use of, because you can and ought to understand its effects. We say "the inferior spirits were generally kept in ignorance," because there have been some, at all times and in all places, who have been the instruments of your trials and expiations. The spirits who were superior to your degree of elevation at that time influenced some men who were not so bad as the rest, to elevate them and guide the others. The Lord would not put a dangerous weapon in your hands, nor would he leave you defenceless. But you are now fitted to understand, and to keep yourselves on your guard. The child cannot touch dangerous weapons without wounding himself, but when he is a man he handles them, and learns their use.

MATTHEW, CHAP. XVII.—VERSES 14-21. MARK,
CHAP. IX.—VERSES 14-30. LUKE, CHAP. IX.
VERSES 37-42; XVII. 5, 6.

The Lunatic—Prayer and Fasting.

Matth. xxvii. (14) And when they came to the multitude, a man came to him, kneeling to him, and saying, (15) Lord, pity my son, for he is lunatic, and suffers fearfully; for he often falls into the fire, and often into the water. (16) And I brought him to thy disciples, and they were unable to cure him. (17) And Jesus answered and said, O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I tolerate you? Bring him here to me. (18) And Jesus rebuked him, and the demon went out of him, and the boy was healed from that hour. (19) Then the disciples of Jesus came to him privately, saying, Wherefore could we not cast him out? (20) And Jesus said to them, Because of your unbelief; for verily I say unto you that if you had faith as a grain of mustard-seed, you should say to this mountain, Henceforth remove from this place, and it shall remove, and nothing shall be impossible to you. (21) But this kind is not cast out except by prayer and fasting.

Mark ix. (14) And on coming to the disciples, they saw a large crowd round them, and Scribes disputing with them. (15) And immediately the whole multitude seeing him were amazed, and ran to him, and saluted him. (16) And he asked the Scribes, What are you disputing about with them? (17) And a man answered from the crowd, and said, Teacher, I brought my son to thee, who has a dumb spirit. (18) And when it seizes him, it rends him, and he foams at the mouth, and grinds his teeth, and is parched up. And I asked thy disciples to cast him out, and they could not. (19) And he answered and said to him,

O faithless generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I tolerate you? Bring him to me. (20) And they brought him to him, and when he saw him, the spirit tore him, and he fell on the ground, and rolled about foaming. (21) And he asked his father, How long has it been thus with him? and he said, From a child. (22) And it has often cast him into the fire and into the waters, that it might destroy him; but if thou canst, aid us, and have compassion on us. (23) And Jesus said to him, If thou canst believe; for all things are possible to him who believeth. (24) And immediately the father of the boy cried out, and said with tears, Lord, I believe; help thou my unbelief. (25) And Jesus seeing the multitude running together, rebuked the unpurified spirit, saying to him, Thou dumb and deaf spirit, I command thee to come out of him, and not to enter into him again. (26) And having cried out, and rent him sore, it came out, and he was as if dead, so that many said that he was dead. (27) But Jesus took hold of his hand, and lifted him up, and he stood up. (28) And when he came into the house, his disciples asked him privately, Wherefore could we not cast him out? (29) And he said to them, This kind cannot be cast out, except by prayer and fasting. (30) And going forth from thence, they travelled through Galilee, and he did not wish that any one should know it.

Luke ix. (37) And it came to pass on the next day, when they had come down from the mountain, a large crowd met him. (38) And behold a man cried out from the crowd, saying, Teacher, I pray thee look upon my son, who is my only child. (39) And behold a spirit seizes him, and suddenly he cries out and rends himself in madness, and it hardly departs from him, greatly injuring him. (40) And I besought thy disciples to cast him out, and they could not. (41) And Jesus answered and said, O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you and tolerate you? Bring your son here to me. (42) And while he was coming to him, the demon threw him down and convulsed him. And Jesus rebuked the unpurified spirit, and healed the boy, and gave him back to his father.

Luke xvii. (5) And the Apostles said to the Lord, Increase our faith. (6) And the Lord said, If you had faith as a grain of mustard-seed, you should say to this mulberry-tree, Be thou rooted up, and planted in the sea; and it should obey you.

§ 194. These verses furnish one of the most striking illustrations of the mission and power of Jesus. Most of you pass over his words, "I say unto thee, come out of him;" and yet they contain the most positive revelation of the superiority of Christ.

You can, from a spiritual point of view, compare the event which is described to you with those which take place in your own days. You yourselves are poor deaf-mutes, like the child whom his father brought to Jesus; you are blind also; and your infirmities, caused by evil influences, lead you into all kinds of dangers, and are the cause of all your falls. The disciples of the Master are unable to deliver you,

because their faith is too weak, and because they do not fast and pray sufficiently, in the spiritual sense intended by Jesus. Moreover, although they are commissioned to drive away the "demons" who subjugate you, by freeing you from the passions and vices which would destroy you, there is nevertheless a sediment of these vices and passions in their own hearts, which they themselves must struggle against; and hence their exorcism is of the lips only. The "demon" ridicules their efforts, and continues his subjugation.

Let all among you who would deliver your brethren from the evil spirits who mislead them, act like Jesus. Fast and pray; but do not misunderstand the power of prayer, and the act of fasting. Prayer is not the lip-repetition of more or less harmonious, sonorous, and humble words, which are supposed to reach the Lord, O, you do not find sufficient support in your mouth to raise your words to God. It is in your hearts that the force exists which offers up the spiritual prayer of pure thoughts in an outburst of love and adoration, and elevates it by a single effort to the foot of the Eternal Throne. What signify the words, or even the thought? All that is needful is love and humility; these are the actions of your life which react upon your thoughts, and compose a perfect whole, worthy to approach the abode of perfection.

Fast; but fast spiritually. What are the substances which contribute to sustain your material organism, to the Lord? What does it matter to him at what time you satisfy your material necessities? This belongs to the organic law, with which the spirit ought to have nothing whatever in common. Fast, by abstaining from guilty, useless, and even frivolous thoughts; fast, by practising sobriety in satisfying your material necessities; fast by modesty, regular habits, and wise conduct. Fast by discovering how to impose on yourselves privations which do not injure your own frame, but which may have a salutary influence on your brother's. Fast by denying yourselves somewhat superfluous, above what you deem necessary, and offer it to your brother, who does

not possess what is indispensable to sustain the body; whether bread, or clothes, or shelter. Such, friends, is the kind of prayer and fasting which avails to cast out demons of the worst kind.

We have already given you sufficient explanations respecting the causes and effects of this subjugation. Jesus himself gave the disciples a clear and precise explanation of the causes which prevented them from driving away the evil and greatly suffering spirit who obsessed the child. Faith, a powerful lever which can move the world easier than any other, is the only means which you could employ with success; faith leads to prayer, and prayer, by its fervour and perseverance, aided by spiritual fasting, finally touches the guilty spirit, enlightens and redeems him. Jesus had no need to have recourse to prayer, because, being a pure and perfect spirit, invested with omnipotent power over the impure spirits, his apparently human life passed on piously before the Lord; and because his mission was an act of faith and love, an active and permanent prayer which uplifted him (even apart from his spiritual superiority) above all other spirits in force and persuasion.

Know well the power of prayer, and realize the powerful assistance which you can draw from it by attracting the guardian spirits of humanity to yourselves. Prayer is not a form of words repeated daily for a given end. Under such circumstances, it becomes sooner or later, mechanical. Efficacious prayer, like that of Jesus, consists of the actions of life, when they are unceasingly upheld by the thoughts of God, and continually referred to him. It is a continual elevation of thought, wherever you are, and whatever you are doing. It is an incessant aspiration towards the Creator, guiding you in the practical paths of truth, love, and charity, for your own intellectual and moral progress, and for that of your brethren; an aspiration which disengages you from humanity, and causes the spirit to rule over everything which is material.

We must now give you some special explanations.

(Mark ix. 14, 15.)—The people were awaiting the arrival

of Jesus to witness a new "miracle;" and the Scribes were casting ridiculous accusations on Jesus, and were expatiating on the failure of the disciples, and endeavouring to persuade the people not to await the return of the Master. On the arrival of Jesus, the masses were deeply impressed. The word amazed does not convey the idea. A feeling passed over them like that which causes the heart of man to beat when he feels that some great event is about to take place. It is an indefinable sensation which the Evangelists endeavoured to express by the word "amazed."

(Matth. xvii. 14; Mark ix. 17-21.)—When the child's father said first, "He is lunatic," and then added, "He is possessed by a dumb spirit," he expressed two opinions which he held on the subject; thus in his ardent desire for the cure, calling the Master's attention to everything on which he thought it might be useful to enlighten him. The Gospels contain various details of events which complete each other when brought together. The words of the father and the disciples were not spoken all at once; there was a discussion. If you remember this, you will not think it absurd when a succession of events and words are recorded concerning the same event, but which do not naturally spring from one another. When you speak long on the same subject, do you always employ the same words; and does not discussion lead to your regarding the facts from new points of view?

When the father brought the child to the disciples before the arrival of Jesus, they supposed that he suffered only from a disease which was termed lunacy, because the symptoms were attributed chiefly to the action of the phases of the moon. But, in truth, the child was under the influence of an obsessing spirit, who conformed with the idea of lunar influence (for the attacks occurred at regular intervals), lest the real causes of the evil should be suspected. The obsessing spirit had produced these attacks at periodical intervals by the power of his will since the infancy of his victim, and he knew his advantage in keeping up the belief in a material disease.

The father brought the child to the disciples, hoping for a material cure. There had been a discussion ; and the efforts of the pupils of Jesus showed the father that the influence of the stars had nothing to do with the case, but that it was a case of possession, that is, in the present instance, subjugation. He therefore implored the disciples to deliver his son, who was possessed with a dumb spirit ; or subjugated by a spirit who had deprived him of speech by his fluidic action. The father was influenced both by his previous ideas and by the discussion with the disciples, which had led him to suspect obsession, especially as they were unable to effect a cure ; and consequently, in speaking to Jesus, he represented his son both as being lunatic and as possessed by a dumb spirit, and as falling into the fire and the water under this influence.

(Luke ix. 39 ; Mark ix. 18.)—The child cried out with terror when he felt the presence and influence of his enemy through the fluidic action which preceded subjugation and its effects by the combination of their perisprits. The obsession or subjugation produced a kind of epilepsy, showing itself in strong muscular contraction.

(Matth. xvii. 15, 16 ; Mark ix. 18, 19 ; Luke ix. 40, 41.)—In speaking to men, Jesus used human expressions suited to the intelligence of those whom he addressed, and of such a description as to impress them profoundly. The Master's exclamation was addressed to those whose faith was not sufficiently strong ; for if they had had more confidence in his words, they would have had more influence. Jesus would then have assisted them by his powerful will, by giving them the secret aid and support of the superior spirits, as he had already done before ; for they had already, to some extent, performed actions which were called miraculous, when he sent them into the neighbouring towns, and gave them power to cure the sick, and to cast out demons (Matth. x. 8).

Jesus addressed his disciples in the words, " O faithless and perverse generation," because they had not sufficient confidence, and therefore did not obey him. Do not forget

that faith alone can work miracles, whereas those who hesitate or doubt are deprived of their faculties, and led into difficulties which they are not always able to overcome. These words were not intended to apply to the disciples only, but to all the people, by bringing forcibly before them the power and holiness of the Master, whose word alone was sufficient to deliver the child.

(Mark xvii. 19.)—The obsessing spirit made the child feel his influence ; who perceiving that an attack was coming on, uttered a cry of terror. Jesus left the spirit to the evil caprices of his free will, till he said to him. " I say unto thee come out of him, and enter no more into him." There was a reason for this : Jesus could have commanded the spirit to depart without convulsing the child, but the action would have lost a great part of its prestige in the eyes of the multitude. You must not forget that Jesus, though acting for the benefit of the child, acted thus for the benefit of the multitude also ; everything being pre-arranged for the general good.

(Mark ix. 23.)—Jesus spoke figuratively, as was generally the case ; but you can perceive the truth in the figure. What prodigies cannot be effected by the mighty power of faith ! All is possible to him who believeth, for the spirits of the Lord gather round to assist him ; but let there be no error or misinterpretation. Faith must be clairvoyant, intelligent, foreseeing, and wise. It does not consist in receiving, with bowed head, whatever is given to it in all the mystic absurdity originating in some diseased brain ; nor does it consist, especially in the case of the Spiritist, in believing that it is only necessary to call on the aid of good spirits to aid you in trifling or unworthy actions. Faith must be enlightened, for she ought always to march with firm step on the path which leads to God. Faith must be strong ; for she must conquer herself in order to obtain what is fitting for her ; Faith should be wise, for she ought never to exceed rational limits.

(Mark ix. 24.)—You have here an expression of simplicity and humility. The father believed that Jesus had power to

exorcise the spirit ; but in the simplicity and humility of his heart he did not feel his faith sufficiently strong to deserve such a mercy ; and this very fear spoke in his favour.

(Matth. xvii. 17 ; Mark ix. 26, 27.)—The cry uttered by the subjugated child was caused by the suffering and convulsion which he experienced from the sudden and violent separation of the two perisprits, which had been combined by the obsessing spirit to produce subjugation. When the subjugation ceased, the child remained as if dead, owing to the exhaustion of the shock which he had experienced ; and this was designed to manifest the power of Jesus to the multitude still more strongly. Jesus then took him by the hand, and lifted him up, making use of magnetic action to restore the fluidic power. It was, as you know, an act of will which a benevolent spirit might also have accomplished.

(Matth. xvii. 18 ; Mark ix. 28.)—The question which the disciples asked Jesus, “Why could not we also cast out this demon?” shows you that they had already healed the sick, and cast out obsessing spirits, to deliver those who were subjugated by them. If they had not already possessed and exercised this power, within certain limits, they would not have been surprised at having failed ; and, in fact, would not even have ventured to attempt to cure such a case.

The Master trained his pupils while he was with them. Everything was designed to concur in developing their faith, and qualifying them for the mission that they were required to accomplish when that of Jesus was completed. The power which the disciples possessed of healing diseases and driving away evil spirits, was afterwards to be exercised on a larger scale, without ever failing, through the continual but secret assistance of the superior spirits, after they had entered upon their active mission, and had become capable of safely accomplishing their task. The disciples were gifted with some faculties, which were limited in their scope as long as they moved in a narrow circle, but which were developed suddenly when the proper time had come.

Your own medianimity is now like that of the disciples, in its earliest stage ; but contrary to what was the case at the time of the disciples, it will culminate during the presence of the Regenerator, a spirit on a superior mission, who will lead humanity up to the point of innocence (that is, perfection) which it ought to attain. But before this, your mediums will obtain isolated results beyond the usual order ; and the nearer the time approaches, the more these events will increase and multiply.

We cannot fix the date. The Lord has said, Watch and pray ; for you know not at what hour the trumpet shall sound which shall call the dead from their tombs ; the hour at which God shall cause elevated spirits to be reborn materially upon your earth who shall give an impetus to the virtues which they preach, by practising them to their fullest extent. The head of the Catholic Church will then be the head indeed, in the true sense of the word ; and when the Church of Christ becomes universal, he will form one of the chief pillars of the edifice. When you shall behold him walking in humility, girt with a cord, and the pilgrim's staff in his hand, you may say, "The buds of the fig-tree are beginning to swell ; the summer is near."

A superior mission is one designed for the regeneration of humanity, and which predominates over the labours of all other missionaries in completeness and power ; and any spirit sent on such a mission is himself superior to all others who are engaged in human work like himself. The head of the Catholic Church will bow to the influence of such a Redeemer ; and the Church will then be truly prepared to become universal, as the Church of Christ. You need not pry further into the secrets of futurity, for everything is revealed to you which it is needful for you to know at present.

(Matth. xvii. 19 ; Luke xvii. 5, 6.)—The explanation which we have given you of the words "All things are possible to those who believe," will help you to understand the true spiritual meaning of the Master, when he said to his disciples, "And nothing shall be impossible to you."

This was figurative, for it is obvious that the words do not apply to the material action ; but Jesus made his disciples understand that faith would enable them to perform actions which would appear to be as impossible as to command a mountain to move from one place to another, or a tree to be uprooted and cast into the sea.

Do not think that men would have been informed at that time of the material results which might be obtained. This would have led them to search for powers which were still intended to remain unknown. There was a hidden sense in the Master's words ; a prophecy veiled, and not openly expressed, of the outward results which the disciples would be able to accomplish at a later period, as they had already sometimes acted, within certain limits, without being aware of it. These words likewise exhort the Spiritists of your own days to act with an intelligent knowledge of causes, to obtain similar results. Such is the sense included in the thought of Jesus, which the New Revelation was designed to reveal. These words apply specially to the Spiritist, as they give him an idea of the results which he may obtain by means of such a Faith as we have already described.

The words spoken by Jesus and recorded by Luke were pronounced at a different place and time from those recorded by Matthew ; but we place them together to avoid repetition. The Master's teachings were often essentially the same, but varied in form, according to the place and audience.

(Matth. xvii. 20 ; Mark ix. 28.)—The more perverse are the impure spirits, the more need is there for the incarnate spirit to raise itself in order to conquer them. A merely erring spirit is more accessible to remonstrances, advice, and kindness ; but a great criminal is hardened, and will only yield to force. The spirit who subjugated the child was one of the most perverse.

Consequently, in dealing with demons of this kind, you can only use the moral force which is acquired solely by the elevation and superiority of the incarnate spirit. What can raise your spirit more than prayer and fasting practised

spiritually, and from the heart, in the sense which we have explained ?

§ 195. What was the fault for which the child had been subjected to this dreadful expiation ?

For abusing his moral power in a previous existence. Do you not know the pernicious influence which a developed but perverse spirit may exert on men who are weaker in intelligence ? We need not relate the history of the spirit now, for we should only lead you from the path which is traced out for you.

Had the obsessing spirit suffered from the fault of the other ?

He had not, and his previous history is of no consequence. But you should understand that the weak and credulous spirit who had been the victim was not very culpable, whereas the part played by the obsessor of the child denoted a perverse nature. There are relations which are brought about by affinity. The guilty spirit attracts his own enemy, because the guides of the spirit who is about to expiate his offences do not oppose the tormentor. Consequently the latter is attracted to his victim by his evil instincts, and seizes upon him believing him to be defenceless ; but nevertheless, if he exceeds the limits of the moral or physical suffering which the patient ought to endure, the superior spirits check him immediately.

MATTHEW, CHAP. XVII.—VERSES 22, 23. MARK,
CHAP. IX.—VERSES 31, 32. LUKE, CHAP. IX.—
VERSES 43-45.

Jesus foretells his Death and Resurrection.

Matth. xvii. (22) And while they were travelling in Galilee, Jesus said to them, The Son of Man is about to be betrayed into the hands of men ; (23) And they shall kill him, and on the third day he shall rise again. And they were greatly distressed.

Mark ix. (31) For he taught his disciples, and told them, The Son of Man shall be betrayed into the hands of men, and they shall kill him, and when he has been put to death, he shall rise again on the third day. (32) And they understood not the saying, and feared to ask him.

Luke ix. (43) And they were all amazed at the mighty power of God. But while they were all wondering at all the things which Jesus did,

he said to his disciples, (44) Keep these sayings in your ears, for the Son of Man is about to be betrayed into the hands of men. (45) And they understood not this saying, and it was veiled from them that they should not comprehend it, and they feared to ask him concerning this saying.

§ 196. These verses explain themselves. Jesus revealed future events to his disciples to impress their minds more strongly, and to increase their faith. He prophesied his death, to make his resurrection more imposing. Was this not the effect of the veiled words of Jesus? His disciples understood that their Master was prepared to die; but his "resurrection," as it presented itself to their minds, was an event that they regarded as so extraordinary that they endeavoured to understand how Jesus could be three days absent from their sight. The disciples were ignorant but devoted men; for although they were elevated spirits on a mission, they were subject to the law of the incarnation which they had chosen.

We can explain this by a very ordinary and even trivial comparison, which will nevertheless give you an idea of the influence of matter on spirit, as regards the surroundings amid which the disciples were born and lived, with respect to the object of their mission. Mark the process of compressing a truss of hay, to carry it more easily. Its volume is reduced, and its constituent stalks scarcely seem to exist. But subject it to the action of moisture, and release the pressure, and it soon expands, and regains its former volume.

However developed the spirit may be, if it undergoes an incarnation which is designed to be ignorant, simple, or even idiotic, it has nothing at its disposal but a sluggish intractable instrument, which it cannot use. It is like a piano in which the metallic strings have been replaced by hempen cords; and, however fine the touch of the player, he can draw no sound from it. It was absolutely necessary for the success of the mission of Jesus that his instruments should be ignorant, and known to be so. This greatly enhanced the effect of the subsequent development of their faculties, when the hempen cords were replaced by sonorous strings which interpreted the tone and thought.

Jesus had promised to send his disciples the Holy Spirit, (that is, inspiration from heaven, and superior guidance), and this took place when the disciples felt their intellectual faculties developed under the influence of the superior spirits. The torpor of the cerebral matter gave place to lucidity, and their medianimic faculties were developed, to aid them still further in overcoming the obstacles which matter, however slight, opposes to the most elevated spirit when he assumes a body of flesh like yours. Independently of the vital fluid which circulates in the veins, with the blood, and the nervous fluid which gives elasticity to the muscles, nerves, and joints, and aids in the movement of the organic machine, there exists the spiritual fluid which serves to develop the intelligence. This envelopes the cerebral matter which receives impressions, and renders it more or less flexible, and fitted to receive and to retain. If you could see it, you would behold a luminous layer spread over the brain, something like varnish over a table. It is upon this layer of fluids that we operate to transmit thought to you, to produce inspiration, and to act on the vital and nervous fluids in the case of psychographic, or speaking mediums. Your brain, which is the seat and reservoir of the spiritual, vital, and nervous fluids, then becomes, so to speak, the galvanic pile which we set in motion, and which transmits the current to the whole body, according to the effects which are to be produced. These explanations will enable you to understand how the cords of hemp were changed for sonorous cords, under the influence of the superior spirits who aided the Apostles in their mission.

(Matth. xvii. 23 ; Mark ix. 32 ; Luke ix. 45.)—The disciples only understood that they were in danger of losing their beloved Master ; but the meaning of his death and his resurrection was covered by too thick a veil. It was necessary for the accomplishment of their mission that they should not be able to understand it in spirit and in truth, as it was only designed to be revealed to men by the present Revelation. They were greatly distressed ; for they believed that Jesus possessed a human body like their own, and that he

would really and physically endure the tortures of a violent death. But this event was designed to be an example of love and self-devotion, attended by emotions similar to the grief that a tender mother experiences for her cruel and murderous children, when they repay with crime the maternal love and devotion which would raise, console, and save them.

"They feared to ask Jesus," for the almost immediate resurrection which seemed to their eyes to be the correlative of a real death, left doubts in their minds of its realization, even as a miracle, which led them to shrink from even questioning him on the subject.

MATTHEW, CHAP. XVII.—VERSES 24-27.

Jesus pays Tithes.

(24) And when they came to Capernaum, the tithe-collectors came to Peter, and said, Does not your Teacher pay tithes? (25) He says, Yes. And when they had come into the house, Jesus anticipated him by saying, What think you, Simon? of whom do the kings of the earth take tax or tribute? from their own children, or from aliens? (26) Peter says to him, From aliens. Jesus said to him, Then are the children free. (27) But lest we should offend them, go into the sea and cast a net, and take the first fish that comes up, and open his mouth, and you will find a stater; take this, and give it them for me and thee.

§ 197. These verses teach men that they should submit to the laws of their country, however severe and unjust these may appear, or really are, until they are legally repealed by the influence of moral force, guided by reason and enlightened discussion, which in time leads to truth and justice, and to all true civilization and progress.

Before Peter referred the matter to Jesus, he replied to the taxgatherers in the affirmative, because he felt sure that his Master would fulfil all the obligations of a citizen; that is, a man who submits peaceably to the laws of his country, even if apparently or actually unjust in themselves. But although Jesus conformed to the demand, he pointed out the injustice of paying this tribute, in his remarks to Peter.

The children of the kings of the earth denote the natives

of the country. In the case of the Romans, the children were the Roman citizens, and the aliens were the conquered nations ; but in the case of the Hebrews, and throughout the conquered territories, the aliens were the conquerors, the Roman nation, as represented by its proconsuls ; and the children were the native inhabitants, the conquered nations. Therefore the native inhabitants ought not to pay tribute, being on their own soil.

But, at the same time, Jesus ordered Peter to pay the tribute, "lest," as he said, "we should offend them," because the disciples of Jesus were Hebrews, and would gladly have sought a pretext to free them from their obligations towards the foreign power. You must not forget that the Jews always hoped to find a temporal leader in Jesus, and in acting thus, the Master set them a lesson of humility and submission to established laws, even if they were rigorous and unjust, while at the same time he displayed his power by a miracle. This event is to be explained like others which are called miraculous. We have given you general explanations in speaking of the miraculous draught of fishes.

A spirit, by will-power and the aid of spiritual magnetism, directed the action of the fluids which drew the fish to the bottom of the water where the stater was lying, and the current carried the coin into its mouth, and raised it again to the surface, and urged it towards the place where it was captured. Are you not aware that there are great treasures which would excite human cupidity, at the bottom of the sea ?

Is there anything extraordinary that the fish which brought the coin to the surface was guided by magnetic currents under spirit action, to the place where it was lying, and took it into its mouth ? Jesus said to Peter, "Give them the money for me and thee," because the other disciples were absent at the time, and had paid their own tribute from the common purse.

MATTHEW, CHAP. XVIII.—VERSES 1-5. MARK,
CHAP. IX.—VERSES 33-41. LUKE, CHAP. IX.
VERSES 46-50.

Lessons of Love, Charity, and Humility.

Matth. xviii. (1) In that hour the disciples came to Jesus, saying, Who then is the greatest in the kingdom of the heavens? (2) And Jesus called to a little child, and set it in the midst of them, and said, (3) Verily I say unto you, If you do not change, and become as little children, you shall not enter into the kingdom of the heavens. (4) Therefore whoever shall humble himself as this little child, he shall be the greatest in the kingdom of the heavens. (5) And whoever shall receive such a little child in my name, receiveth me.

Mark ix. (33) And they came to Capernaum, and when they were in the house, he asked them, What were you disputing about on the road? (34) And they were silent, for they had been disputing with each other on the road, who was the greatest. (35) And sitting down, he called the twelve, and said to them, If any one wishes to be first, he shall be the least of all, and the servant of all. (36) And taking a little child, he set it in the midst of them, and taking it in his arms, he said to them, (37) Whoever shall receive one of such little children in my name, receiveth me, and whoever receiveth me, receiveth not me, but him that sent me. (38) And John answered him, saying, Teacher, we saw one casting out demons in thy name, who does not follow with us, and we forbade him, because he does not follow with us. (39) And Jesus said, Do not forbid him, for there is no one who can exert power in my name, and can easily speak ill of me. (40) For whoever is not against us is on our side. (41) For whoever shall give you so much as a cup of cold water to drink, because you are Christ's, verily I tell you he shall by no means lose his reward.

Luke ix. (46) And a dispute arose amongst them, as to which of them should be the greatest. (47) And Jesus seeing the dispute in their hearts, took up a little child, set him among them, and said to them, (48) Whoever shall receive this little child in my name receiveth me, and whoever receiveth me, receiveth him that sent me. For he who makes himself the least among you, he shall be great. (49) And John answered and said, Master, we saw some one casting out demons in thy name, and we forbade him, because he followeth not with us. (50) And Jesus said to him, Do not forbid him, for whoever is not against us, is on our side.

§ 198. The words of Jesus, taken together, include lessons of love, charity, aid for the weak, faith, trust, humility and simplicity. Is it not said that he who desires to be the first shall be the last of all, and the servant of all, but that he who is the least among you is the greatest? Everything is comprised in these few words. Be like the child whom Jesus took in his arms; trust in your weakness, and you will find support in him; be simple of heart, and you

will find in him the key to all knowledge ; be charitable towards your brethren ; and you will find in him the most admirable type of charity. Follow the example set by Jesus : be the " little children " whom he takes in his arms ; be humble, feeling your ignorance and weakness ; be gentle and submissive, knowing that you receive all from one more powerful than yourselves ; above all, be trusting, feeling the strength of the mighty arms which support you, and raise you to the height of the Master of masters. Do not seek to raise yourselves by your own efforts, for you would fail. Do not think yourselves of more value in your Father's eyes than your brethren, nor desire to raise yourselves above them ; but seek to aid them to rise by giving them the best advice—the advice of your example.

(Matth. xviii. 1 ; Mark ix. 33, 34 ; Luke ix. 40.)—The dispute among the Apostles which led to their asking Jesus, " Who should be the greatest in the kingdom of the heavens ? " arose from envy, due to the natural tendency of the incarnate spirit. You know that the influence of the flesh upon the spirit is such that even the most elevated suffers from it. The disciples thought that Jesus exhibited a kind of preference for one of them, which led to the envy of the others. There was some excuse for this, for it arose from the great love which they bore towards their Master. John was not more loved, but more loving, which drew him nearer to the Master, and led the others to imagine that he was more favoured.

Do not be surprised at Jesus asking, " What were you disputing about on the road ? " You have been told that Jesus read the thoughts of his disciples, even before they were spoken ; but you must always remember that the disciples believed that his humanity was like their own, and that it was necessary for Jesus to permit them to believe it.

(Matth. xviii. 3.)—If you do not abandon human notions and tendencies, you cannot enter into the kingdom of the heavens ; for the flesh leads to pride, ostentation and ambition. Trust everything to the Master, and never rely upon your own merits. Otherwise you will not attain to perfection.

(Mark ix. 34.)—The spirit who seeks for predominance is ruled by pride; but you are aware that pride must be humbled before it can be destroyed. Consequently he who would raise himself above his brethren by pride, falls; for he will have to suffer a base expiation as an inevitable consequence.

(Matth. xviii. 5.)—Simplicity of heart and humility of mind are the source and principle of all virtue, and open the way to all knowledge, and to all moral and intellectual progress.

(Matth. xviii. 4; Mark ix. 36; Luke ix. 48.)—"He who receives a little child in the name of Jesus, receives Jesus." He who bends down to the level of the weak and simple, shares his lot with them, and enables them to profit by the intelligence, strength, and knowledge which have been granted to himself. He imitates the Master, who has done so much for you, and, in acting thus, he draws down to himself the blessings of the Lord; and Christ is pleased with him.

"He who thus receives a little child, receives Jesus, and receives him who sent him." He who obeys the law of love taught by Jesus, eagerly gives his aid and protection to anyone whom he is able to assist in any way. In acting thus, he obeys the law of Christ, and the Lord reads his heart. Thus he receives the Father, for he does not consider what profit he may derive from his conduct. The little child is too weak to do anything for him; and he therefore aids it solely out of love for the Son; and for Him who sent him. Such a man is the least in the eyes of men, and the greatest in the eyes of God, owing to his purity and innocence; that is, his purity of intention, and the integrity of his heart and life.

(Mark ix. 38-40; Luke ix. 49, 50.)—Why desire to stay the course of Faith? Why desire to force men to walk in a path that is open to them, when they can reach the same goal by following a parallel road? Jesus combated from this very time the mystical tyranny which tells you, "Believe and worship with me, or you will be liable to eternal punish-

ment." You should understand the benevolent words of the Master, "Forbid him not; he who is not against us, is on our side." Yes, dear ones, he who follows the path of our divine Leader; he who admires his laws, and is not content with a sterile admiration, but practises them, he is for Christ; and he is his brother. His elder brother, who has entered into the kingdom of the Father, and has attained to perfection, is preparing a place there for those who walk in his steps. The Master has not opened one track only to your feet; but you will find his footsteps everywhere where good is to be accomplished. Follow them without making yourselves uneasy about those who would stop you; drive away, in his name, all the "demons" who tempt and assail humanity; begin by driving them from your own hearts, and you will work "miracles" of faith and love; for by working them in the name of Jesus, you will be with him, and he will be with you. He commands us to direct you to advance; and the mercy of the Lord will rest upon you.

The exact words spoken by Jesus were, "He who is not against me is for me;" and the errors of translations are unimportant. Some have rendered them, "He who is not against you is for you; and others, "He who is not against us is for us." The incarnate spirit who did not follow Jesus as a disciple, but who cast out demons in his name, was a missionary spirit. Do not misunderstand us; a spirit may be sent on a mission without being necessarily a superior spirit. In the present instance, he was an enlightened spirit, who had not been prevented from recognising the divine mission of Jesus by the trammels of the flesh; and being animated by a lively and ardent love, he went to preach the Master after his own fashion, although he had only heard him spoken of; and trusting in his name, which he knew must draw down the mercies of the Lord, he drove away the impure spirits, being aided by superior spirits who seconded his efforts. He was an isolated stone, contributing to the building of the edifice. There have been many such in the past, and will be more in the future.

(Mark ix. 41.)—"Do acts of charity for the love of God." The love of God is the supreme and universal love. It therefore rises above all the influences of matter, and lends all its energies of mind and soul to the well-being of its brethren, whether known or unknown ; friends, or enemies. By thus practising human brotherhood, man draws nearer and nearer to the divine model, and by walking more and more in his steps, he draws nearer to perfection, and thus endeavours to fulfil the saying of Jesus, "Be ye perfect, as your Father in the Heavens is perfect."

§ 199. In Mark ix. 39, and in corresponding verses of the Gospels, what is the true meaning of the word "virtutem" * in the Latin translation, rendered by "miracle," in the English and French versions ; having regard to the definition given by the Roman Church to the word "miracle," and the sense which it attaches to it as a derogation from the laws of nature ?

Miracle is the only word in your language which could be used to express the idea from your point of view. But your language has no technical word to signify an act beyond the known laws of nature.† The Roman Church should have defined a "miracle" as an event which takes place by the will of God, according to actual and unchangeable laws of nature which are still unknown to man, but which have existed from all eternity ; and an event which the Church, like your human science, is obliged to recognize as taking place, by the permission of God, under spirit-action.

LUKE, CHAP. IX.—VERSES 51-56.

Calling down Fire from Heaven.

(51) And it came to pass that when the days were fulfilled that he should be received up, he himself both set his face to journey to Jerusalem, (52) And sent messengers before his face ; and while they were travelling, they came to a village of the Samaritans to prepare for him. (53) And they would not receive him, because his face was

* The Greek word is *δύναμις*, and literally means power.—TRANSL.

† Of course the original reference is to French. Perhaps "preternatural," as opposed to "supernatural," would express the idea in English.—TRANSL.

as though he would go to Jerusalem. (54) And when his disciples James and John saw it, they said, Master, wilt thou that we shall call fire from heaven to fall upon them and destroy them, as Elijah did? (55) And he turned round and rebuked them and said, Do ye not know what manner of spirit ye are of? (56) For the Son of Man is not come to destroy the lives of men, but to save them. And they travelled to another village.

§ 200. (V. 51.) The time, which was approaching when Jesus should be received up, was the moment when he disappeared from the eyes of men. The word ascension expressed the thought, because it seemed to the assembled disciples that Jesus rose up until they could see him no longer.

(V. 53.) There was nothing extraordinary in the refusal of the Samaritans to receive Jesus. You know that the Samaritans did not share in the ideas of the Jews, properly so called, and that the temple at Jerusalem had not the same prestige in their eyes as in those of the Israelites.

(V. 54.)—It was under the influence of national ideas and traditions that James and John, who were abandoned to their own impulses, asked Jesus to call down fire from heaven upon the Samaritans. They thought that the destruction of the village and its inhabitants would strike others with astonishment and terror, and thus increase the power of the Master. They spoke under a retrograde influence, instead of following the path of progress which Jesus had impressed upon them. Consequently, Jesus rebuked them, saying, "The Son of Man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them." This was an example of charity, like everything which the Master said or did. And as regards James and John, you will remember that when Jesus selected the Apostles, he called them Boanerges; that is, the sons of thunder, because he foresaw this event.

The law of Moses was stern and cruel; but it was suited to the age and people. Milder teachings were needful to improve those violent natures whom the ages had enlightened. They needed a law which taught them love for hatred, pardon for insult, and kindness for injury.

Jesus came not to abolish the Law, but to fulfil it. The law of Moses was a shapeless mass which the Master handed

over to the workmen to hew into shape. Ages have worn away the roughest inequalities and the sharpest angles. Jesus came and gave it shape, and polished its outlines with his sharp, strong chisel. Centuries have passed away, and the material is softened. It is now time to complete the work; the master has taken his graving-tool, and is about to develop the most delicate tracings. Divine love is about to appear on these marble lineaments, and is ready to pierce to this heart of stone; and when the work is finished, and the breath of the Divine Artist shall have given it life, the statue will be animated by all the virtues, and will show the world that Jesus came not to abolish the Law, but to justify, and make it perfect.

MATTHEW, CHAP. XVIII.—VERSES 6—11. LUKE,
CHAP. XVII.—VERSES 1, 2. MARK, CHAP. IX.
VERSES 42—50.

Offences.

Matth. xviii. (6) But whoever shall cause offence to one of these little ones who believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone such as those which are turned by an ass should be hung upon his neck, and he should be cast into the abyss of the sea. (7) Woe to the world because of offences, for it is needful that offences should come, but woe to that man through whom the offence cometh! (8) And if thy hand or thy foot give thee cause of offence, cut it off and cast it from thee; for it is good for thee to enter into life maimed or lame, than having two feet or two hands to be cast into the age-lasting fire. (9) And if thy eye give thee cause of offence, pluck it out, and cast it from thee; it is good for thee to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast into the Gehenna of fire. (10) Beware lest ye despise one of the least of these, for I say unto you that their angels in the heavens behold through all the face of my Father in the heavens. (11) For the Son of Man is come to save that which was lost.

Luke xvii. (1) And he said to the disciples, 'It is impossible that offences should not come, but woe to him through whom it cometh? (2) It were profitable for him if a millstone such as is turned by an ass were hung round his neck, and he were cast into the sea, than that he should cause offence to one of these little ones.

Mark ix. (42) And whoever shall give cause of offence to one of these little ones who believe in me, it were better for him if a millstone were hung round his neck, and he were cast into the sea. (43) And if thy hand give thee cause of offence, cut it off, for it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, rather than having two hands, to go into Gehenna, into the unquenchable fire. (44) Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. (45) And if thy foot should

give thee cause of offence, cut it off, for it is well for thee to enter into life lame, rather than having two feet to be cast into Gehenna, into the unquenchable fire. (46) Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. (47) And if thy eye give thee cause of offence, cast it away, for it is well for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast into the Gehenna of fire. (48) Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. (49) For every one shall be salted with fire, and every sacrifice shall be salted with salt. (50) Salt is good, but if the salt becomes saltless, how shall it be salted? Have salt in yourselves, and live peaceably with one another.

§ 201. (Matth. xviii. 6; Mark ix. 42; Luke xvii. 2.)—He who gives offence to a child; he who by his words and example leads into evil one of his brethren, however despicable he believes him, is guilty in the eyes of God, not of his own fault only, but of the faults which he has caused others to commit; and he will have to expiate them. Endeavour to destroy in yourselves every root of sin, and every infraction of the divine law. Tear from yourselves everything which could lead you into evil of any kind, and strive to understand the true meaning of the words of Jesus. Destroy in yourselves whatever leads you into evil, no matter what suffering it may occasion you. It is better to suffer for a few days of your miserable existence, by breaking away from your vices, than to risk incurring ages of suffering in the errant life of the guilty spirit. Remember that the devouring fire is not quenched, and that the gnawing worm does not die. It is a burning and incessant suffering which consumes the spirit without ever annihilating it; it is a continual torture during every second of life in the errant state, without any hope of its ever ending; for hope is the drop of water which falls on thirsty lands; the manna gathered by the starving; the balm spread over the bleeding wound; and the guilty spirit cannot hope until repentance has opened his heart to it.

(Matth. xviii. 7; Mark ix. 43; Luke xvii. 2.)—It is impossible that you should not find spirits less advanced, or more obstinate in evil than others. They lead others into evil by their wicked actions, and their bad advice and example. Woe to these men! They would do better if they acknowledged their moral inferiority, and did not

incarnate themselves in too elevated centres, or in a part of your planet which is too civilized for them. Their ignorance and vices may mislead those around them, and cause scandal by checking them in their efforts, or leading them into a fall. It would be better for them if they waited to be incarnated until they were prepared to enter upon a better life; but they must endure the punishment due to their pride and evil tendencies. They are forewarned before incarnation of the good and evil consequences, which are likely to result to themselves and others from the natural tendencies of their spirit. If they persist, they accept the consequences of their conduct beforehand; it is a bill which they have signed, and which they must pay when it falls due.

Spirits have free choice of the worlds where they desire to incarnate themselves, provided that they remain within limits corresponding to their degree. A spirit who departs from his station never does so without being forewarned of the consequences which his rashness may entail upon him. If this would be injurious to others, and especially if he desires it from malice, for the simple purpose of injuring those among whom he would find himself, the spirit would be forbidden to go beyond the grade of incarnation in which he would be among his equals in advancement, intelligence, and morality. Consequently the incarnations of inferior spirits in a relatively superior grade, are generally due to two causes. The first is the desire of progress; a rash desire, though sincere at the time. The other cause is the necessity of producing a strong impression on the nations or even families among whom these incarnations take place; and they lead to progress among both classes. The introduction of these inferior beings into your midst always serves as a punishment or expiation, and consequently contributes to the progress of those who are their victims; and perhaps still more to the progress of those who struggle against evil example and advice, and come forth victorious. It also contributes to the morality and progress of the spirit who is born out of his station; and

his intercourse with those more elevated than himself leads to his establishing relations with them ; and he thus receives the good seed which will one day spring up in him. Spirits do not always exercise free choice in the selection of their experiences ; for there are limits. The spirit who desires to progress, however backward he may be, has the choice of the means of attaining it. He is guided in his selection ; but nevertheless the perverse spirit suffers the punishment and trials which are inflicted on him, at a fitting time and place. The spirit who perseveres in evil is compelled to wait till he is permitted to reincarnate himself. Sometimes he does not wish it, and is compelled to submit to incarnation as a means of development and purification for himself. He is then sent to a scene selected for the purpose, so that his incarnation should be profitable to himself, and should also conduce to the advancement of those who receive him among them. Thus the spirit is not always permitted to incarnate himself or not, as he pleases. As regards his experiences, free will and free choice are the rule, in the majority of cases, whatever may be his perversity, and his wicked ends and aims in incarnation ; but there are exceptions harmonizing with the condition of those to whom they refer. If the incarnation of spirits hardened in evil was always voluntary, it would disturb the laws which have been established for the progress of all.

You live in a state of society which is generally composed of inferior spirits, among whom there are only a few elevated ones. Consequently, there are very guilty ones among them who cause offences. Woe to them, for they will have to expiate them ! They are a touchstone to those who believed themselves strong enough to resist temptations to evil, and bad example. If their confidence has misled them, and they are not strong enough to resist, they also will have to expiate both the faults which they have committed, and the pride which led them to venture upon a more difficult experience than they ought to have attempted. It is therefore necessary that there should be offences in the world, for it is by contact with vice that virtue itself is

strengthened by accustoming itself to overcome them ; but woe to those who have brought the offence, and woe also, though in a less degree, to those who suffer themselves to be led astray !

Gentleness, faith, and good example are the means by which Spiritists should strive to spread the New Revelation. These methods will succeed with some of your brethren, but all are not yet prepared to receive it. You should proclaim your beliefs openly, and state their foundations with persuasive gentleness ; but if you meet with obstinate natures (and these are many) leave them to themselves. Either in this existence, or in later ones, time will effect what you yourselves were unable to accomplish. The future is long ; for it includes eternity.

(Matth. xviii. 8, 9 ; Mark ix. 43-48.)—He who lives in evil, does not enter into eternal life. After death, he passes into a limited spiritual existence, wholly of suffering ; and he only quits it after repentance, to recommence a new earthly life of trial and expiation. But he who has succeeded in freeing himself from the sources of the faults which might lead him astray, enters into spiritual life ; for he sees the future which is reserved for him unfolding before his eyes. Consequently he enters into the kingdom of the heavens ; that is, into the path which leads to perfection, for the earth disappears from him from the moment when he has reached a degree of purity which enables him to comprehend the eternal existence which is spiritual life ; the normal life of the spirit in space. When he has reached this point, he may recommence an earthly mission, no longer as an expiation, but as an experience, if he has not attained to moral perfection, and even if he has attained this point, an earthly mission may be useful to enlarge his knowledge to an extent corresponding to the moral progress which he has attained. A spirit may be greatly advanced morally, and yet have much needful knowledge to acquire. It is not necessary for him to acquire it on your earth, when he has attained to a certain degree of advancement ; for yours is not the only world of material incarnations. Think what a small speck

you inhabit, whereas worlds are innumerable in their differences, conditions, and the various degrees which separate or connect compact matter and the fluidic state by insensible gradations. Consequently the progress which the spirit makes on your earth or on others for the good of humanity, is greatly enlarged when he returns to the spiritual state. What he learns in his prison of flesh, perfects itself all at once when he is at liberty. The artist, shut in a narrow room, models the statue which he wishes to carve ; but when he is released, he gives it gigantic proportions, because he is in possession of the needful materials, and has air, space, and a grand view around him.

(Mark ix. 49.)—Fire emblematically expresses expiation as a means of purification, and therefore progress for the guilty spirit. Among the Hebrews, salt was the emblem of purification for every victim offered as a sacrifice to the Lord. In order to make himself intelligible, Jesus used figurative expressions selected from Hebrew customs, prejudices, and traditions. You know that fallen and guilty spirits must free themselves from moral impurities by expiation, reparation, and progress, and must suffer incarnation and successive reincarnations on the inferior worlds, for the sake of gaining experience, each earthly existence being followed, and the next preceded, by expiation in the spiritual world, consisting of moral sufferings and tortures appropriate to their offences. Then, when they have been purified from everything which was a cause of offence to themselves and their brethren, they no longer require to be “salted with fire,” or to be cast into the Gehenna of fire, where the gnawing worm never dies, and the consuming fire is never quenched. The spirits then continue their progress by successive but no longer expiatory reincarnations in more and more elevated worlds, which are the abodes of peace and happiness, until the influence of matter over them has wholly ceased, and they become pure spirits.

(Mark ix. 50.)—Be worthy in yourselves, but let not your merit become a source of disorders ; for the Lord can destroy it by the nature of the next incarnation, and you

would become like the salt which has lost its saltness ; that is, worthless. Strive to gain worth in the eyes of God and man, and let all your efforts tend towards this object. It will give a great impetus to your progress ; but do not pride yourselves upon your merit ; for however great it may seem to yourselves, or in the eyes of men, it has but little savour in the eyes of the Lord. Do not therefore lose the little worth which it may possess by making it intolerable to those around you. Never forget that you are nothing before the Great Being, and that it is in his eyes only that you ought to aspire to become worthy. Do not parade your merit before others, nor seek to make them perceive it, and still less admire it ; but strive in humility of heart to increase it until it shall be pleasing to your Father, by the intellectual, and more especially moral, progress that it shall have caused yourselves and your brethren to make.

(Matth. xviii. 10.)—The Master held up infancy to his disciples as an emblem of purity and virtue. The guardian angels of pure and virtuous men are elevated spirits, and are therefore in a state of purity which draws them nearer to God ; for it permits them to communicate with more elevated spirits who are the messengers of the pure and perfect spirits who “see” God. But yet Jesus spake figuratively. The spirits who approach the Lord, and “see” him, are too elevated to descend to humanity. Their mission is more general, and more extended ; they diffuse the lustre which radiates from the Lord throughout the worlds ; and we transmit and soften it to enable you to bear it.

(Matth. xviii. 11.)—When Jesus spoke thus, his thoughts embraced the past, the present, and the future. The Law was given to men to direct them ; but they had abused it. They no longer obeyed its commandments, but travestied its precepts, and made tradition the basis of their dogmas. Jesus came to save those who had lost their way, for he opened up to them a new path, which was an extension of that from which they had strayed ; but this path has once more become encumbered with dogmas, traditions, and interpretations ; the confused ruins of the building which Jesus

had raised so high with so much simplicity and clearness, by proclaiming the love of God above all things, and of the neighbour as oneself, which commandments imply and include the observance of the Decalogue. If men would teach and practise this twofold law, they would become the true worshippers of the Father in spirit and in truth, whom he desires to worship him, and consequently members of the Church of Christ, whose temple is your planet, and whose followers are those who practise this double love, with simplicity and devotion, and thus work by teaching and example towards the fulfilment of the Master's promise, "There shall be one fold, and one Shepherd."

Jesus still comes to seek for and save that which was lost. He comes, by the New Revelation, and by the spirits of the Lord, to bring back to the right path, in the name of the Spirit of Truth, those who were lost. Strive not to deny him again; for the further you advance, the more direct should be your course.

MATTHEW, CHAP. XVIII.—VERSES 12-14. LUKE,
CHAP. XV.—VERSES 1-10.

The Lost Sheep and the Lost Drachma.

Matth. xviii. (12) What seems it to you? If a certain man should have a hundred sheep, and one of them should go astray, doth he not leave the ninety-nine on the mountains, to go and seek for that which has strayed. (13) And if he should find it, verily I say unto you that he rejoices over it more than over the ninety-nine which had not strayed? (14) So it is not the will of your Father in the heavens that one of these little ones should be lost?

Luke xv. (1) And there drew nigh to him all the tax-gatherers and sinners to hear him. (2) And the Scribes and Pharisees murmured, saying, He receives sinners, and eats with them. (3) And he spoke to them this parable, saying, (4) If any man among you has a hundred sheep, and loses one of them, does he not leave the ninety-nine in the desert, and go after the lost one, until he finds it? (5) And when he finds it, he takes it on his shoulders rejoicing. (6) And going into his house, he invites his friends and neighbours, saying to them, Rejoice with me, for I have found my lost sheep. (7) I say unto you that there is joy in heaven over one repentant sinner, rather than over ninety-nine just persons, who have no need of repentance. (8) Or any woman having ten drachmæ, if she should lose one drachma, does she not light a lamp and sweep the house, and seek carefully till she finds it? (9) And when she has found it, she invites her female friends and

neighbours, saying, Rejoice with me, for I have found the drachma which was lost. (10) Thus I say unto you There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one repentant sinner.

§ 202. The same idea underlies the parables of the lost sheep and the lost drachma ; but the latter appealed more forcibly to the poor to whom Jesus spoke. Jesus came to aid those who are weak, or those who are struggling against the difficulties in their path, and are liable to fall back. The father of a family watches tenderly over the sick child, and his heart leaps with joy when he beholds him restored to health.

The well-beloved Son of the Father has acted thus ever since the appearance of man upon your planet. All his loving care is concentrated on his sheep, but those who suffer, or those whom a bad shepherd has led astray, are those over whom he exerts his most active vigilance. He then seeks and calls them, and his joy is great when his loving voice has found its way to the heart of him who was lost ! O then the good Shepherd runs towards the sheep who has answered his call ; he lifts it in his arms, and brings it back to the fold, that it may not again wander from the flock !

(Luke xv. 7.) When Jesus alluded to the joy of recovering the lost sheep, he did not seek to turn aside the just from the right way. You must not suppose that the just mean those who have never fallen, for no perfect spirits are incarnated on your planet ; but the just are those who have ceased to fall ; or more correctly, those who make earnest, constant and sustained efforts not to fall again.

Those who do not understand the object of the Master's words, often accuse him of discouraging the efforts of the righteous, by representing the repentant sinner as more precious in his eyes than the just. Not so ; they only express the tenderness of God towards all his creatures, which leads him to feel transports of joy at the return of a lost sheep. This explanation, however, is itself symbolical. The Lord in his infinite foresight always knows that you will return to him, and when you will return ; and therefore this emotion of joy is to be attributed rather to the spirits who

are commissioned to lead you back. You can understand this. If one of your children is seized with a dangerous illness, do you not feel emotions of joy and gratitude towards God, upon his recovery, which your other children do not awaken? Yet you do not love him more than his brothers; and if he should grow up exhibiting evil propensities, from which his brothers are free, do you not lavish all your care upon him who might go astray and ruin himself in the eyes of the world? And if your efforts are crowned with success, do you not experience a great happiness? Yet you do not love him more than his brothers, but the difficulties overcome and the victories gained have given more value to success.

Those who find fault with the words of Jesus as representing the repentant sinner as more precious in his sight than the just, do not understand their meaning. Each must always receive according to his deserts; but we who are commissioned to lead you back, and whom the Master called the angels of God, watch over you like the shepherd over his sheep, and employ all our efforts to gather you under the Master's eye, and we are permitted to rejoice, when we have found a lost sheep which we can restore to the fold.

Jesus said, "Your Father in the heavens does not desire that one of these little ones should be lost." No creature of the Lord can remain estranged from him; and at some moment or other, they will all gather around his feet. Eternity is yours; labour to attain the place which is reserved for you in eternal life, for the sooner you obtain it, the sooner you will enter into this existence of happiness, where all is work, charity, love, knowledge and progress.

If the leaders of the Church had understood the words of Jesus, they would never have insisted on eternal punishment, and the fall of the angels. Upon this fall, they base the doctrine of eternal damnation, a double error arising from the letter which killeth, and the rejection of the spirit which giveth life. The progress of intelligence and modern conscience has already condemned this error as false and

monstrous in the name of the omnipotence, justice, goodness, and infinite mercy of God, the Father of all and everything which exists, who embraces all his creatures in his universal and infinite love. The New Revelation likewise condemns this double error in the name of Jesus, through the Spirits of the Lord, who are the organs of the Spirit of Truth.*

§ 203. It has been said that there is something touching in the parable of the lost sheep, but that the joy of the woman at recovering the lost drachma is a wholly material emotion which inspires but little interest.

Those who speak thus should reflect, and try to understand the Master's words before attempting to criticise them. We have told you that Jesus spoke to the poor; and the principle sentiment in the parable of the lost drachma appealed to the poorer classes, to whom the smallest sum acquires a great importance by the difficulty of procuring it, and the labour of earning it. The material sentiment, which is only the instrument of the parable, is highly interesting, for it is intended to show the poorer classes that everything which is lost in a spiritual point of view should excite the same zeal to recover it, and the same joy upon its recovery. Repentance for neglected virtues, and sorrow for the vices which have replaced them, is the way to recover what has been lost, and afterwards to make it useful for moral and intellectual progress. O, then, our joy—the joy of the spirits of the Lord, whom the Master called the angels of God, is great indeed! How we have sought for the lost drachma! How happy we are to have recovered it, and to say to men, “Children whom we love, we still hold in our hands the source of the nourishment which not only sustains the perishable body, but the immortal soul. We have that which will nourish and strengthen you until you are strong enough to attain to God.”

* There is much difference of opinion among students of spirit-philosophy, owing to the well-known fact of circles generally attracting to them spirits whose ideas are more or less in harmony with those of the sitters; but I am not aware that any Spiritists continue to maintain the doctrine of eternal punishment.—TRANSL.

Can you not imagine the joy of the woman who recovers part of the property which she had lost? Think of the poor mother, surrounded by her children, whose husband will return from work, worn out with fatigue. How can she say to him, "One of the ten drachmas earned so painfully, the hope and means of support for the family, is lost"? But the courageous mother does not allow herself to give way; and she searches and searches till she finds her lost drachma, the means of support for her husband and children, and her joy is great! Now, for every day that her savings hold out, she can give her husband and children the bread which they need to sustain and strengthen them.

LUKE, CHAP. XV.—VERSES 11-32.

The Prodigal Son.

(11) And he said, A certain man had two sons. (12) And the younger of them said to his father, Father give me the share of property which falleth to me. And he divided his living between them. (13) And not many days after, the younger son gathered everything together, and went abroad into a distant country, and there squandered his property, living profligately. (14) And when he had spent everything, there arose a great famine in that country, and he began to be in want. (15) And he went and contracted himself to one of the citizens of that country, and he sent him into the fields to feed swine. (16) And he longed to fill his stomach with the locust-pods that the swine did eat; and no one gave unto him. (17) And coming to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father have a superfluity of bread, and I perish with hunger! (18) I will arise and go to my father, and will say to him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee, (19) And am no more worthy to be called thy son; make me as one of thy hired servants. (20) And he arose and came to his father. And while he was yet a long way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck, and embraced him. (21) And the son said to him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son. (22) But the father said to his slaves, Bring out the first robe, and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand, and sandals on his feet. (23) And bring in the fatted calf, and kill it, and let us eat and be merry; (24) For this my son was dead, and is alive again, and was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry. (25) But his elder son was in the field, and as he came and drew near the house, he heard music and dancing. (26) And calling one of his servants, he asked him what these things meant? (27) And he said to him, Thy brother has come, and thy father has killed the fatted calf, because he has received him in good health. (28) And he was angry, and did not wish to go in. Then his father came out and invited him. (29) And he answered and said to his father, Lo, I

serve thee so many years, and have never transgressed thy commandment at any time ; and thou hast never given me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends. (30) But when this son of thine came, who has wasted thy living with harlots, thou hast killed for him the fatted calf. (31) And he said to him, Child, thou art with me at all times, and all that I have is thine. (32) It was fitting that we should make merry and rejoice, for this brother of thine was dead, and is alive again ; and he was lost, and is found.

§ 204. The Great Father has long ago given you your share of the goods, but what use have you made of them? Instead of showing him your love and gratitude, you have squandered the treasures which he has entrusted to you. Your inheritance is knowledge, virtue, and eternal life in the presence of the Lord ; and you have squandered these treasures among bad companions ; for you have lost them amid the various vices in which you have indulged. Then the famine has made itself felt ; for it is severe in the country where you are living. You have felt that you must live, and you seek to return to the Father's house. Do not loiter on the way, for no matter how miserable and guilty you may be, the Great Father will receive you with open arms, and his servants will be eager to make a feast for the child who has returned.

§ 205. Some have objected that the Prodigal Son may wish to return not from the love of good, but from the desire of exchanging misery for prosperity.

You forget that Jesus often uses figurative expressions which may apply both to the body and the soul. There are some exceptions, but they are self-evident. After the Prodigal Son has squandered his treasures (his strength, knowledge, and wisdom), and wasted his time and intelligence, he feels the famine which preys upon him. He feels the void within him, and weariness overpowers him, and leads him into the service of evil passions which exhaust without nourishing him. While suffering in this miserable condition, he thinks bitterly of all that he has lost ; and it is then that he remembers his Father—his God, so tender and merciful, who can alone restore his lost treasures to the guilty child ; and he comes, humble and repentant, to say to the Lord, "My

Father and my God, I have sinned against thee ; I thought myself strong enough to dispose of the riches which thou hast confided to me according to my own pleasure, without advice or aid. I have claimed them before the time, and knew not how to use them ; I have exhausted them, O my God, and now thou beholdest me destitute, no longer possessed of the intelligence which directs ; no longer loving the knowledge which elevates ; or possessed of strength for the increasing struggle. I am hungry, and I feel that thou didst not create me to live in this abject condition, and my aspirations turn towards thee, for thou alone canst enable me to recover what I have lost. O my Father, open thine arms to receive thy penitent child, and restore its strength, intelligence, and love to my soul, that I may perceive more clearly the faults which I have committed against thee, and may constantly endeavour to repair them."

§ 206. What is the meaning of the parable in connection with the words of Jesus? (Luke xiv. 34, 35.) "Salt is good, but if the salt has lost its saltiness, how shall it be salted? It is good neither for the land nor for the dunghill, but men cast it out. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear."

He who perseveres in evil, and will listen to no advice, is like sterile corn. It is not fit to be cast into the earth, for it would produce nothing, nor is it fit to be thrown upon the dunghill, for the dunghill should aid in fertilizing the ground, and the sterile corn is useless to the good seed, but would appropriate a share of the nourishing juices of the soil. It would not come to perfection, and the feeble and unproductive stalk which might spring from it, would injure the rest, without yielding anything itself. The man who remains obstinately hardened becomes incapable of yielding the fruits of example and morality which might be profitable to his fellows. He absorbs the care and attention of those who devote themselves to him, which, though unprofitable to himself, would be useful to well-intentioned men. Consequently these men are cast down into the inferior worlds, as the bad corn is thrown into the fire ; and eternities will be passed there in wailing and gnashing of

teeth; for it will require ages of ages, not to bring the primitive worlds to perfection, but even to raise them to the present level of your own.

The converted sinner feels great joy among those who love him; but his conversion does not destroy the consequences of his offence, although it lightens them. What does expiation actually consist in? The consciousness of past evil, and efforts to repair it. What spirit who repents of his faults will not preserve a remembrance of them bitter in proportion to the greatness of the mercy of the Lord, no matter how fully he may feel himself pardoned? What spirit would not joyfully attempt anything in the world to efface the traces of the misspent past, and to regain and deserve the mercies which have been vouchsafed to him? Does not an honest man feel the pangs of conscience whenever he has been led to deviate from the course which he feels to be the only honourable one? And is not his sole desire to repair the evil by effacing it with good? And if this is the case with some among you, what must it not be with spirits, all whose senses are extremely acute and highly developed? The justice of the Lord must always take its course in expiation and reparation, which are the paths of purification and progress for guilty spirits; but he who can look back upon the past, can lighten the future. Never forget this.

§ 207. What is the meaning of verses 26-32, relating to the elder son?

(V. 26, 27.)—The servant's reply is designed to show the reception given by the Lord to a sincere penitent, the joys which he reserves for him, and the spiritual aid which he grants him if he thus repents, to enable him to walk, without interruption or backsliding, in the path which he has left.

(V. 28-30.)—The elder son's reply to his father exhibits the secret tendency of man which leads him into jealousy and selfishness, and causes him to envy what is done for his brethren, and to look upon their lot as superior to his own. The reply sprang from this selfishness and envy; for man does not regard the daily mercies which he himself receives,

but is jealous of those which he believes to be granted to others. What recompense should the Lord give him? Is it not enough that he allows him to share in his mercies? Moreover, the feast given in honour of the prodigal's return contains no pledge for the future, nor does it release him from any labour or responsibility. His return is celebrated by a feast to-day; but to-morrow he will have to return to his place, and to work with so much the more zeal and activity, because the work which was given him to do has remained so long in abeyance.

(V. 31, 32.)—The father's words are designed to show that all are equal before God. It is the same idea as that which underlies the parable of the labourers in the vineyard. The father had divided his property between these two sons, and each had received an equal share; but he who remained with his father lived in common with him ("all that I have is thine"); that is, while profiting by the favours already bestowed upon him, he receives fresh mercies daily; but as he often becomes indifferent to them from habit, he does not realize this, and is jealous when he sees what is done for those who return to the same condition as himself.

(V. 32.)—The guilty spirit who perseveres in evil is dead, because his condition is the emblem of death; for death being strictly the cessation of all movement, it is figuratively the cessation of all progress. Repentance brings him to life again, by enabling him to resume his upward march; and in this sense also he was lost and is found.

LUKE, CHAP. XVI.—VERSES 1-9.

Parable of the Unjust Steward.

(1) And he said to his disciples, There was a certain rich man who had a steward; and this man was accused to him of wasting his property. (2) And he called him, and said to him, What is this which I hear of you? Render an account of your stewardship, for you cannot act as steward any longer. (3) And the steward said to himself, What shall I do, for my master deprives me of the stewardship? I cannot dig, and I am ashamed to beg. (4) I know what I will do, that when I am thrust out of the stewardship, they may receive me into their houses. (5) And summoning to him every one of the debtors of

his master, he said to the first, How much do you owe my master? (6) And he said, A hundred measures of oil. And he said to him, Take your bill, and sit down quickly, and write fifty. (7) Then he said to another, And how much do you owe? And he said, A hundred measures of corn. And he said to him, Take your account, and write eighty. (8) And the master of the unjust steward commended him, because he had acted prudently; for the sons of this age are more prudent than the children of light in their own generation. (9) And I say unto you, Make yourselves friends of the unrighteous mammon, that when ye fail, it may receive you into the age-long habitations.

§ 208. This comparison has not been understood. Jesus says, the master praises his defaulting steward, who has secured his future by making friends among his debtors, though at his master's expense. What, then, will not the Lord do for those who have prepared friends for themselves in the life eternal, by using their earthly wealth to do good, and entitling themselves to the gratitude and affection of others by relieving their sufferings! Although gratitude and affection are often disregarded on earth, yet they always awaken with fresh life and vigour in the world of spirits. The parable is not an example, as the malice of some would make it, or as others have supposed, who have ignorantly desired to preach from every letter of every verse which composes it; but simply a comparison.

§ 209. What is the true meaning of v. 8?

It is the sequel of the same comparison. If a man can commend his servant for his foresight, although acting fraudulently, and against his interests, how much more will not the Lord show himself indulgent to those who have employed their earthly wealth to do good, and thus to attach to themselves grateful friends! Nor must you take the words, "unrighteous mammon," literally. They were designed to make a strong impression on the material men of that age; and the term of contempt is used to show man the little value which he ought to set upon worldly wealth, which generally leads to evil.

At that period he who could turn events to his own profit, even by a bad action, was considered clever and intelligent; whereas he who allowed himself to float with the current was

considered a fool. Is it not, unfortunately, still the same in the eyes of some men of your own period? Jesus endeavoured to render his idea comprehensible by a homely illustration. If a man approves of the foresight of one of his fellows, even when manifested by a fraud of which he himself is the victim, what favour will not the Lord show to him who shall have employed the perishable and dangerous goods of the earth to acquire friends who plead his cause, and help him to enter into the eternal refuge! Even when he has been guilty, his good actions will be credited to him, and will lessen the sufferings reserved for the wicked.

"The sons of this age are more prudent than the sons of light in their generation." The meaning is obvious, for man thinks much more of his material than of his spiritual future. Even those who possess light, and desire to succeed, are comparatively indifferent, and overlook many opportunities of seeking the favour of the Lord, whereas worldlings who seek to improve their present affairs or their material future, act with much more determination and energy.

§ 210. What is the real meaning of v. 9?

We have already told you that Jesus applies the term, "unrighteous mammon" to earthly riches, which are so often a source of evil to man. He tells you to use this fertile source of evil to do good. Change it into a fount of gratitude and love, for even if your acts are evil and your faults numerous, you will meet with friends who are grateful for the good that you have done them, who will help you to endure the consequences, and will unceasingly implore the divine mercy on your behalf.

§ 211. Some one has made the following criticism on the parable of the Unjust Steward: "A man is going to dismiss his steward, because he is told that he is wasting his property. The steward tries to get himself out of the scrape by a remarkable piece of roguery. He calls together his master's debtors, and arranges to give each, in exchange for the bond which he has signed, another of less value. Thus, an amount which was previously 100 becomes reduced to 50 or 80; and these are the friends whom the steward secures for the future. Then the master hears of the whole affair (we are not told how), and how do you think he acts? Certainly he will punish his dishonest servant, or

at least send him away, as he was already about to do on account of his former defalcations. By no means : after the last affair he has completely changed his intentions ; and so great is his esteem for one who is commonly termed a sharper, that he now praises the unjust steward for his prudent conduct. We are not told that he kept him on ; but that is understood. The conclusion relates to the use of badly-acquired wealth ; but the unfaithful steward did not use his own wealth to provide for his future ; but property that was not his—in short, his master's ; and his act was neither more nor less than a robbery. The explanation, from a Christian point of view, is that it is necessary to sanctify badly-acquired wealth by giving alms to the poor."

The explanation is as worthless as the criticism ; in fact, it is more so ; for the criticism is simply based on the letter without the spirit. The only means of quieting the reproaches of conscience for badly acquired wealth is by restitution. You will find it difficult to persuade the masses to accept the spirit when freed from the letter. Some are attached to the letter from ignorance, and others from hostility. They do not seek for the meaning of the thought, but confine themselves to the letter, which is a sure method (or at least they believe so) to overwhelm with ridicule everything which they are unable to understand. It is not that those men who destroy at pleasure are deficient in intelligence, but they do not write in good faith, and even if they are sincere, their interpretations are warped by pride and foregone conclusions, or by their inability to perceive the spirit hidden under the letter. We have only to repeat that the parable is not an example, but merely a comparison between the judgment which a man forms upon an evil action, because it is clever and prudent, though fraudulent, and the favourable judgment of God respecting those who strive to do well, notwithstanding their previous faults. You should reflect on the period and manners of the age, and the character of the men to whom the parable was addressed. Jesus does not separate this part of the parable from that which follows it, and which we are about to explain. If you reflect upon the entire parable, and its interpretation, you will refrain from resting on the letter which killeth, and supposing that the Sublime Model could ever have sanctioned and praised fraud or evil actions.

LUKE, CHAP. XVI.—VERSES 10—12.

Conclusion of the Parable of the Unjust Steward.

(10) He that is faithful in little, is faithful also in much ; and he that is unjust in little, is unjust also in much. (11) If therefore you have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will trust the true to you? (12) And if you have not been faithful in that which is another's, who will entrust your own to you?

§ 212. This last paragraph of the parable reveals the thought of Jesus, who availed himself of a comparison which the masses could understand and appreciate, and then destroyed, to the thinking mind, the appearance of approbation which some supposed him to express for the unjust steward. He denounces him who tampers not only with celestial, but also with worldly wealth.

(V. 10.)—He who desires to walk in the ways of the Lord should never tamper with his conscience. Let him never think that any fault is so slight that it may be overlooked, or that any defect is too trifling to be corrected ; for he will gradually glide over the precipice ; and he who strains the eternal laws in little things, will also strain them in great things. Watch over yourselves unceasingly ; and let your outward actions be as irreproachable as your thoughts.

(V. 11.)—Are not worldly goods, earthly treasures, and unrighteous mammon (so called because they are so often a source of evil to man), a means entrusted to you to enable you to acquire the eternal riches? But if you make a bad use of them, you draw down punishment on yourselves instead of blessings and rewards. Human life is the key which opens the gates of the sanctuary to you, but it is a brittle key which breaks in the hands of him who does not know how to use it. He is then obliged to wait until he is entrusted with another which he learns to use better.

(V. 12.)—The wrongs you inflict on your brethren, and the evil which you have done, will recoil upon yourselves. If good can blot out previous evil, evil can also temporarily stay the efficacy of good. We say temporarily ; for the infinite mercy of the Lord never allows the smallest particle of good to be lost. Evil often crushes and paralyses it, but

the Lord will one day search for it, and will preserve it for you. Hope ever, without faintheartedness, for evil can never obliterate good, whereas good always lessens evil.

MATTHEW, CHAP. XVIII.—VERSES 15-17. LUKE,
CHAP. XVII.—VERSES 3-4.

Pardon of Injuries.

Matth. xviii. (15) And if thy brother shall sin against thee, go and tell him, between thou and him alone ; if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. (16) But if he will not hear thee, take with thee one or two others besides, that every word may be established by the mouth of two or three witnesses. (17) But if he refuse to hear them, tell it to the Church, and if he also refuses to hear the Church, let him be to thee as a Gentile and taxgatherer.

Luke xvii. (3) Look to yourselves ; and if thy brother shall sin against thee, rebuke him, and if he repent, pardon him. (4) And if he shall sin against thee seven times a day, and seven times a day shall return to thee, saying, I repent ; pardon him.

§ 213. (Matth. xviii. 15-17.)—If you have to reproach one of your brethren in any way, it is your duty to try to reclaim him by soft and persuasive words. Jesus was addressing Jews, and used language appropriate to their necessities. He could not set himself diametrically in opposition to their quarrelsome and rancorous customs all at once ; and for this reason he advised them to have recourse first to witnesses, and then to the Church, to settle their differences. But to-day the Master says to you, through us, Blot out your brother's fault by every possible means, and seek to come to a reconciliation with him ; but if he persists in his error, call the good spirits who watch over all, as witnesses of his obstinacy. Call them to your aid to restore peace and concord, but beware of proclaiming the wrongdoing of your brother by subjecting him to the judgment of the Church. Firstly, are you quite positive about the fault which he has committed ? Are you sure that you have not provoked him, or encouraged him in it, even if you have not caused it, by your impatience or vexation, which has more and more alienated him from the right way ? When you went to him, did you act with all needful gentleness and

delicacy, so as not to wound his susceptibility, his pride, or even his shame? Have you done all you could to save him from blushing, even to himself? And if you have not done so, are you not afraid of being judged yourself by the judges whom you have asked to sit in judgment on your brother? Dear pupils we say unto you in the name of him who gave this teaching to men, You have advanced, and your feelings ought to advance too. Pardon every offence with sincerity, and hide it from the eyes of strangers lest you should cause your brother to blush; and you will yourselves be pardoned as you have pardoned others.

§ 214. What did Jesus mean (v. 17) by “the Church”?

Speaking generally he referred to enlightened men holding the same opinions. As regards the Apostolic and subsequent ages, he meant an assembly of Christians.

What did Jesus mean by the expressions, “a Gentile and a tax-gatherer”?

A man who is despised and forgotten. Jesus spoke to vindictive men, and it was an immense step gained to induce them to forget and despise injuries by forgetting and despising the man who had offended them.

§ 215. If our brother refuses to hear us in private, is it not better to bring the case before “the Church” for his own good, rather than to leave him to himself?

No; do not forget that everyone has his burden to bear, and his experiences to undergo; and do not attempt to take the mote from your brother’s eye in public. Do you not understand that instead of reforming him you run the risk of arousing a resentment in his heart, which will be much worse for him than the offence which he may have committed against you? Do you not comprehend that in such a case you will yourself be responsible for the storm which you have awakened within him?

O never misunderstand your obligations towards one another! You ought to offer your hand, but not to claim your rights by force; you should retain your self-respect,

but not allow your heart to freeze ; and should therefore always avoid proclaiming the wrongs you have received from your brethren, lest you should compel them to blush in public. First of all, you cause them to deny; and then to try to revenge themselves. This is their human instinct; and you thus urge them on further in the wrong course. A soft word and friendly observation in private will nearly always effect more than all the reproaches (especially in public) which you can heap upon an offender. If you should not succeed, what have you lost? Your efforts have been vain; but they have not resulted in anything which you did not desire; and if your brother is hardened in evil, you are no longer responsible. Offer him your hand with gentleness; plead your cause, but do not make yourselves judges of one another; and never compel anyone to come to terms before the Areopagus.

But are there none in our own times who would not return to truth and right if left to themselves, but might be reclaimed by following the course which Jesus prescribed to the Hebrews?

No; the object would fail; the tendency of the period and the guides of each would aid; but the judgment of all would not further advance these proud and vindictive natures. On the contrary, it would awaken a dumb rage in their hearts, which would lurk there; and would their experiences be more profitable for this? Would it not be better for the common interest that persuasion should act little by little, rather than force compel? And do you know so little of men as to suppose that they would acquiesce sincerely in the will of a majority? Certainly not; and if they are guilty, and forced to do justice by the public voice, they will heartily curse both the judges and the accusers who have brought them to shame before all. Will their experiences be more profitable to them then? Indulgence, pardon, and forgetfulness; such is the judgment of God.

§ 216. What is the exact meaning of the words quoted by Luke xvii. 3, 4?

You should never retain any ill-feeling against your

brethren, nor run the risk of such a feeling (however reasonable it may appear), interfering with the sincere repentance of one who has offended you. Moreover, are you not told that you will be judged as you have judged others, and that it will be done to you as you have done to them? You should never forget that it is not seven times a day only, but often seventy times seven times that you offend the Divine Majesty; that you break his laws, and endeavour to evade their action. Be therefore merciful to your brethren, you who have so much need of mercy yourselves, that you may be able to pray sincerely, "Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them who trespass against us."

§ 217. Do the words "if he repent" in Luke xvii. 3, mean that the offender should not have his pardon declared to him unless he repents?

It is useless to fling pardon at the offender to which he is indifferent. In such a case, keep it in your heart, whence it may flow abundantly when repentance calls it forth.

§ 218. What should we think of the command given to the Hebrews? (Lev. xix. 17.) "Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thy heart; but rebuke him publicly, lest thou should sin against him."

The advice was appropriate to the period. The gentleness of the law of pardon was harsh, like all the laws of the Hebrews. It had its charitable side by commanding men to be publicly reprov'd for the faults which they had committed, after due notice given. They were on their guard against this disgrace, and were consequently more accessible to the efforts made to soften them. This fear was more powerful and effective at that period, upon violent, proud, and vindictive men than it would be now. At the present day we say again, Reprove your brother for the faults which you perceive him to have committed; for you may thus enlighten him respecting a wrong which proceeds from ignorance. You may find him on the brink of a precipice, and save him from the fall; but let your advice be fraternal, given in private, and as far as possible indirectly, lest you should shame your brother, and his pride should prevent his profiting by your advice. Be therefore kind and gentle;

right wrongs tenderly, but never arm yourself with a scourge.

§ 219. How can we make these words agree with Matth. xviii. 15-17?

Is there not a link which connects the old Law with the new? Could men break all at once with their prejudices and traditions? Jesus spoke to the men of that age in language which they were able to understand; and it was the gradual ascent which was to lead them up towards his gentle morality, always so full of forgiveness. Compare the explanations which we have just given you with the parable of the adulteress; and ask your hearts whether, while reproving your brother, you also do not deserve to be reproved yourselves; and in this case, as in all others, regulate your conduct by the maxim, "Do unto others as you would have others do unto you."

LUKE, CHAP. XVII.—VERSES 7-10.

Duty and Humility.

(7) And who among you having a servant ploughing or tending flocks will say to him when he comes from the field, Go and rest immediately? (8) But will not say to him, Make ready that I may dine, and gird yourself and wait upon me, that I may eat and drink; and after these things, you shall eat and drink? (9) Does he thank that servant because he did what was commanded him? I think not. (10) So also you should say, when you have done the things that I have commanded you, We are unprofitable servants, for we have done what it was our duty to do.

§ 220. You are told that you are nothing in the sight of the Lord, and that he has a right to expect all from those to whom all has been given. Do not, therefore, pride yourselves upon what you do in hopes of pleasing him, but try to do your duty, and above all things do not act thus with the hope of reward as your sole motive. You should be actuated solely by the feeling of duty, gratitude towards God, and the hope of pleasing him.

LUKE, CHAP. XVII.—VERSES 11-19.

The Ten Lepers.

(11) And it came to pass that as he was travelling towards Jerusalem, he went through the midst of Samaria and Galilee. (12) And as he was entering a certain village, there met him ten leprous men, who stood afar off. (13) And they raised their voice, saying, Jesus, Master, have mercy on us. (14) And when he saw them, he said, Go and show yourselves to the priests. And it came to pass that as they were going away, they were cleansed. (15) And one of them, seeing that he was healed, turned back, praising God with a loud voice, (16) And fell on his face at his feet, returning thanks to him. And he was a Samaritan. (17) And Jesus answered and said, Were there not ten cleansed, but where are the nine? (18) There were none found turning back to give thanks to God, save only this stranger. (19) And he said to him, Rise and go thy way; thy faith hath saved thee.

§ 221. This is one fact more to prove that it is not sufficient to be born into any particular religious faith, to act in such a manner as to find favour in the sight of the Lord. Such events were designed by Jesus as a lesson for mankind. Who is he who shows his gratitude? Who is he who gives glory to God for the mercy which he has received? The schismatic who has been rejected as a stranger; and although out of, and opposed to, the Law, his faith has saved him. Never forget this example. Whether you are under the Law or not, you are all sons of the Most High; sons of God; and you all owe him your love and gratitude for every new mercy which he grants you. Act like the Samaritan, and instead of pursuing your way to fulfil a vain outward ceremony, return on your steps; look upon what you were, and what you are; see what the Lord has done for you, and throw yourselves at his feet in an ecstasy of love and gratitude.

The material cure was effected at the moment when Jesus pronounced the words, "Go and show yourselves to the priests." But the lepers did not immediately perceive that the cure had taken place, for Jesus had calculated the effects of the fluids; and it was under spirit-influence that the Samaritan perceived his cure, and was moved by gratitude to retrace his steps. Jesus was still at the spot where they had seen him, and the lepers had not gone very far when the Samaritan turned back.

It has been asked, Why did Jesus tell the leper to show himself to the priests, knowing that he was a Samaritan, and that it would be against his conscience to do so?

Those who speak thus neither understand the words of Jesus, nor the thoughts which inspired them. He spoke to the lepers collectively, and not to each of them separately; and thus, in ordering them to show themselves to the priests, he spoke to the Jews, who were bound to fulfil this formality. The Samaritan went with the others, not to go through the ceremony, but to return home; and it was then that his gratitude was manifested.


It has also been said: The nine leprous Jews had faith in Jesus, as well as the Samaritan, and could not better show their gratitude and obedience towards their benefactor, than by punctually fulfilling his orders, and going (without turning back, like the Samaritan) to thank God by fulfilling the commands of the Law.

They possessed faith, but not gratitude. Jesus knew the secret motives which regulated the actions of each of them, and the lesson which would spring from the incident.

It has also been asserted that the Samaritan prostrated himself before Jesus as before a divinity; and that it is not the worship of God which is inculcated, but that of Jesus.

This is another error. If those who regard the subject in this light were to reflect that inferiors are accustomed to prostrate themselves before their superiors in Eastern countries, they would have comprehended the act of the Samaritan, who, while gratefully recognising the mighty power of God, nevertheless owed a debt of gratitude to him whom the Lord deemed worthy to act as an intermediary between himself and men. The obedience of the other lepers would have been just as great if their gratitude had taken precedence of it.

The lepers regarded Jesus as a prophet, and only the instrument of the Lord; and it was to God that the grateful acts of adoration were addressed, and not to the personality of Jesus. If a monarch sends his minister to confer some favour upon you, would not the minister be a link between you and the king, and would not your expressions of gratitude be addressed to him, that he might



transmit them to his master? Did not Jesus say, "Were there not ten cleansed, but where are the nine? There was none found turning back to give thanks to God, save only this stranger." And did not Jesus always say that he was the messenger of the Father, and that he received everything from him, and could do nothing of himself?

It has also been said that men have been induced, by false interpretations of this event, to supplant the worship of the One God by that of Jesus.

This event contributed to it, and is one of the numerous links in the chain; but the chief link is the title of the Son of God badly interpreted, in connection with the literal interpretation of the words, "My Father."

LUKE, CHAP. XVII.—VERSES 20—24.

The Kingdom of God.

(20) And being asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God should come, he answered them and said, The kingdom of God doth not come with observation. (21) Nor shall you say, Lo, here, or Lo, there; for behold the kingdom of God is within you. (22) And he said to the disciples, The days will come when you will desire to see one of the days of the Son of Man, and shall not see it, (23) And they shall say to you, Lo, here, or Lo, there, but do not go away, nor follow them. (24) For as the lightning which flashes from the one side under heaven, shines unto the other side under heaven, so shall also the Son of Man be in his day.

§ 222. (v. 20.)—Man bears within him the kingdom of God, for he attains to it by the exercise of his faculties, and by advancing towards moral perfection. "The kingdom of heaven cometh not with observation," because man can only hope to attain to human perfection, which alone will lead him to it, by slow and gradual progress from one ascent to another. Thus moral perfection cannot be reached at a bound, but by slow, toilsome, and incessant labour.

(V. 21.)—The kingdom of God is not a limited locality, as men have imagined. It is not a happy abode to which they can obtain admission; but it consists in boundless virtue. The kingdom of God is within you; it is in the midst of you; but you know not how to discover it. It is the

It has been asked, Why did Jesus tell the leper to show himself to the priests, knowing that he was a Samaritan, and that it would be against his conscience to do so?

Those who speak thus neither understand the words of Jesus, nor the thoughts which inspired them. He spoke to the lepers collectively, and not to each of them separately; and thus, in ordering them to show themselves to the priests, he spoke to the Jews, who were bound to fulfil this formality. The Samaritan went with the others, not to go through the ceremony, but to return home; and it was then that his gratitude was manifested.

It has also been said: The nine leprous Jews had faith in Jesus, as well as the Samaritan, and could not better show their gratitude and obedience towards their benefactor, than by punctually fulfilling his orders, and going (without turning back, like the Samaritan) to thank God by fulfilling the commands of the Law.

They possessed faith, but not gratitude. Jesus knew the secret motives which regulated the actions of each of them, and the lesson which would spring from the incident.

It has also been asserted that the Samaritan prostrated himself before Jesus as before a divinity; and that it is not the worship of God which is inculcated, but that of Jesus.

This is another error. If those who regard the subject in this light were to reflect that inferiors are accustomed to prostrate themselves before their superiors in Eastern countries, they would have comprehended the act of the Samaritan, who, while gratefully recognising the mighty power of God, nevertheless owed a debt of gratitude to him whom the Lord deemed worthy to act as an intermediary between himself and men. The obedience of the other lepers would have been just as great if their gratitude had taken precedence of it.

The lepers regarded Jesus as a prophet, and only the instrument of the Lord; and it was to God that the grateful acts of adoration were addressed, and not to the personality of Jesus. If a monarch sends his minister to confer some favour upon you, would not the minister be a link between you and the king, and would not your expressions of gratitude be addressed to him, that he might

which it has been clothed, and will appear suddenly before the eyes of men in all its purity, and its light will flash like lightning from one side of the horizon to the other; and then the predicted advent of the Son of Man among you will be near.

The deceptive ornaments in which the pure and gentle law of Jesus has been clothed, are all additions of external worship, which detract from spiritual worship; as does also every attempt to materialize the law of Jesus, which can only appeal to the heart and understanding of men. This holy Law will appear suddenly to human eyes in all its purity, when reforms are effected among the ministers of religions. God will provide for this by the needful incarnation of missionary spirits who will lead your humanity to the knowledge of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. This reform will lead men to the period when the various external forms of worship which now divide and separate them will disappear, and become fused into one only—the sincere worship of the Father (God, who is one and indivisible) by prayer offered from the heart, and not with the lips only, true spiritual prayer, based on the actions of a life which is upright and pure before the Lord; by spiritual fasting; and by the practice of the love of God above all things, and of the neighbour as oneself. It will lead to love, reverence, and gratitude towards the Son; Jesus, the Protector and Ruler of your planet and its humanity; to whom you owe everything that you are. It will lead to the invocation of God and his Christ for their powerful protection, and for the aid, support, and sympathy of the Holy Spirit; the good spirits of the Lord. Thus this reform will accomplish the words of Jesus: “The time is coming when men shall worship the Father neither on this mountain, nor at Jerusalem.” Then men will have become the true worshippers, whom the Father requires, and will worship the Father in spirit and in truth; and all the buildings which you call synagogues, churches, mosques, and temples, will be indifferently places of meeting for prayer and instruction, animated by one common feeling of humility, love, and

charity, under the influence and protection of the good spirits ; and the most learned, enlightened, and deserving will be unanimously chosen to preside over these assemblies. The universe is the temple of the Lord ; we will not anticipate the future.

LUKE, CHAP. XVII.—VERSES 25-36.

Signs of the Second Coming of Jesus.

(25) But it is first necessary for him to suffer many things, and to be rejected by this generation. (26) And as it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of Man. (27) They ate, they drank, they married, they gave in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all. (28) So also was it in the days of Lot : they ate, they drank, they bought, they sold, they begat children, they built houses, (29) Until the day that Lot went out of Sodom, it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all. (30) Thus shall it be in the day when the Son of Man is revealed. (31) In that day, whoever shall be upon his housetop, and his clothing in the dwelling, let him not go down to fetch it ; and he who is in the field, let him likewise not turn back. (32) Remember Lot's wife. (33) Whoever shall seek to save his life shall lose it, and whoever shall lose it shall preserve it. (34) I say unto you in that night there shall be two men in one bed ; one shall be taken, and the other left. (35) Two women shall be grinding at the same mill ; one shall be taken, and the other left. (36) And they answered and said to him, Where, Lord ? And he said to them Wherever the body is, there will the eagles be gathered together.

§ 223. In this passage, the spiritual sense is purposely veiled by the letter. Jesus alludes to the manner of the purification and progress of your planet and its humanity, and to the events which will take place at the time when the law of love and charity will be practised in your world, and will effect the regeneration of the human race.

The language of Jesus was intended to make a deep impression on the minds of the men of that age, and of succeeding generations, and to prepare for the advent of the New Revelation, which should explain the Master's words in spirit and in truth.

(V. 25.)—Before the Law taught by Jesus could become established, it was needful that the lawgiver should seal it with the seal of love ; and that generation has rejected it, and still rejects it, for several spirits who were rebellious at

the time of his earthly mission are living among you now, and are still rebellious, whereas some few disciples of Jesus follow his steps, though at a great distance, and endeavour to trace them out.

Jesus descended to set men an example of boundless devotion, and it was therefore needful for him to push it to its utmost limits ; and what could be a greater sacrifice, in your eyes, than that of your life ? The death of Jesus taught you not to attach an exaggerated importance to your earthly existence. But he also showed you by his life that you should not cast it away needlessly, for he apparently endeavoured to save it by flight, and disappeared whenever he was in peril, until the moment when his death was to crown the edifice which his love had constructed.

In speaking thus, we expressed ourselves from the point of human life, and with reference to the beliefs which existed during the earthly mission of Jesus, and which still exist among you. We have revealed his extra-human origin to you ; but, notwithstanding this, you must not forget that although Jesus had assumed a body like yours, but not of the same nature, he intended men to believe in his human origin, that he might fulfil the obligations of humanity, and the law of self-preservation, until the end of his mission, by way of teaching and example.

Verses 26-30 are allusions or allegories on the part of Jesus. The carelessness of man overcomes him in his daily habits, and hinders him from perceiving the danger which hangs over his head ; for he is absorbed in the interests and cares of material life, and regardless of the progress and the future of his spirit. Since the advent of Jesus, the world has always advanced without much thought for its future. It still walks on the same path, and will follow it for a long time, until men learn to comprehend the mistake which they have made in not pursuing the morality of the Master.

The deluge in the time of Noah was only partial. Your human science has now ascertained that it was only one of the numerous cataclysms which have led your globe from the state of incandescent fluids to its present condition. These

successive transformations have taken place according to immutable natural laws, under the spirit-action which overrules the planetary revolutions, and the progressive and ascending course of worlds, humanities, and all the creatures of the Lord. The destruction of Sodom has been explained by science. At that period the world was more incandescent than in your days, and earthquakes often opened fissures from whence issued flaming gases, and sulphurous and bituminous substances. These projectiles were cast up into the air, and fell on the terrified inhabitants. The destruction of Sodom was one of these catastrophes; the city was burned, and its site effaced. When Jesus said, "So shall it be in the days of the Son of Man," he employed a figurative comparison. He alluded to the deluge, and to the destruction of Sodom, because the moment will actually come when every material and carnal spirit will be rejected from your planet, where spirit alone must reign; because the coming of the Son of Man (that is, when the law of love and charity which he personifies shall be practised on your globe) will effect a regeneration of the human species; and those who have loitered behind will be cast forth from your planet, where the Anointed of the Lord will come in due time. But when he comes, the separation of the darnel and the good corn will be completely effected, and the inhabitants of your planet will then have entered upon the spiritual phase. The removal of the darnel will take place in due time, and its commencement is near.

We speak of the spirits who will be allowed to reincarnate themselves on your globe until the final purification; but many spirits who are still more backward and rebellious will be removed sooner. Yes, those spirits who remain recalcitrant until this final period, when their banishment will take place, will be dazzled by the light which will burst suddenly upon their eyes, and will be consumed by the fire of remorse. They will be enabled to understand what they have lost, that they may be filled with a more eager desire to win it back again; and they will one day succeed, for all must attain to perfection. God wills it; it is the immutable

law of progress; and although the errant spirits of an inferior order are, as it were, dependent on the planet in which they incarnate themselves, yet it is otherwise with spirits who are wholly disengaged from matter, who are independent, and at liberty to go from one planet to another according to their degree of elevation, and thus to return to the purified planet from which they were expelled during their moral inferiority.

(V. 31, 32.)—Let not material interests predominate over the thought of man when he understands that he ought to think of his spiritual future without delay. When a man desires to advance in spiritual life, he ought not to look back and regret the material wealth which he may have lost. Lot's wife was concerned about the wealth which she had left behind at the scene of the disaster; she lingered, and fell a victim to the delay. According to the tradition in Genesis (xix. 26) she was "changed into a pillar of salt." She was struck by lightning, and then fell down in ashes, which led to the childish notion that she had been changed into a pillar of salt, and melted.

The allegorical expressions in verses 31 and 32 were designed to make an impression on the contemporaries of Jesus, and on succeeding generations. He addressed them specially to you, and to those who shall come after you; for the time is approaching when the purification of your earth must begin. The first signs of the coming of the Son of Man, and the law of love and charity which he personifies, are beginning to appear on the horizon of your planet. Think of your souls, and do not allow yourselves to be wholly absorbed by the interests, cares, and passions of material life, but be filled with zeal and anxiety for your moral and intellectual progress, and for the future of your spirit, as well as for the progress and the future of your brethren.

(V. 33.)—He who lives only for the present, and concentrates all his efforts on the preservation of his corporeal existence, will at length reach the term of his natural life, and lose it. But as he has been more careful of material

interests than of the salvation of his soul, he will have to begin again, and will find the life which he has lost opening before him the path which he must follow to win the prize. He who seeks to save his (spiritual) life, will lose his corporeal life; but will find the eternal life beyond the tomb. But in losing a life to which he was less attached, because he had occupied himself specially with the progress of the soul, he will gain the life to which he aspired.

This is the general rule. It has been thus in all ages, for all, according to the immutable laws of expiation, reparation, progress, and reincarnation, which is the holy ladder which every fallen spirit must ascend to purify himself, and afterwards to rise to the moral perfection which will lead him to God.

In the allegorical expressions of this verse, Jesus alluded to those spirits now incarnated who will still remain backward and rebellious at the time of the purification of your planet, but who will be permitted to reincarnate themselves upon it until then. But at this time they will be removed, and obliged to reincarnate themselves on the inferior planets, where they must begin again, and where they will find again the corporeal life which they had lost. And these also, when they have striven to save their spiritual life, after having lost their corporeal life, will find the eternal life to which they aspired opening before them after death.

(V. 34, 35.)—All will not have arrived at the same degree of advancement at the time of the purification of your planet, and therefore cannot be admitted to the same existence. There will be a choice to be made in all human conditions; and it is to this that Jesus alluded allegorically, relative to the spirits who will be permitted to incarnate themselves upon your earth, when the darnel shall be separated from the good corn.

(V. 36, 37.)—Jesus replied evasively to the Apostles and disciples, who were not intended to comprehend the spiritual meaning of what the Master said; and they understood him to mean that he did not wish to specify the place. Jesus spoke thus from the same motive which led him to speak in

emblematic figures which would apply to the present and the future. He spoke of your planet, which is subject to his direction. His answer to his disciples implies that the surface of the globe will witness the revolution which his veiled words were intended to announce.

The words, "Wheresoever the body is, there will the eagles be gathered together," signify that progress must extend over every part of your planet, that the planet itself may progress. Consequently, wherever humanity exists on your planet there will be progress and change, amounting to a physical, moral, and intellectual transformation. It will be physical, as affecting the bodies which will pass to the fluidic state by less and less material stages, like the planet itself. It will be moral and intellectual, as affecting the spirits who must accomplish the needful purification, wherever there are faults, and who will be punished by expiations in the errant state, and successive reincarnations, until the darnel has been separated from the wheat; and wherever this purification shall be accomplished, there will the purified spirits assemble.

What Jesus said of your planet, also applies as a general law to all the planets which have arisen, like yours, from incandescent fluids, and which must follow the same progressive and ascending course. As we have already explained (§ 56 and foll.), these planets serve both for the development of the primitive spiritual essences, until the period preparatory to humanity; and also for the incarnations of formed spirits who have fallen, whose incarnations take place according to their degree of guilt, and under the conditions required for their progress, either as primitive incarnations on a planet where man has not previously existed, or upon a planet which has already suffered progress and change, since his appearance.

§ 224. Why are the fossil remains of man so rare, considering that many partial planetary revolutions have taken place since his first appearance on the earth? *

Man was not a witness of all the cataclysms which have

* This question was asked in December, 1864.

revolutionized your globe. Many took place before he appeared upon it. Besides, the human skeleton is not so massive as those of the animals which were contemporaneous with his first appearance, and consequently his remains are more rare. Scientific discoveries will become more numerous, when excavations are carried out more extensively. We have nothing to say about this, for it is not our province to give you a course of natural history here.

MATTHEW, CHAP. XVIII.—VERSES 18-20.

Binding and Loosing.—Presence of Christ.

(18) Verily I say unto you, that whatever you shall have bound on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. (19) Again I say to you that if two of you shall be agreed on earth concerning anything which you shall ask, it shall be done for them by my Father in the heavens. (20) For where two or three are gathered together in my name, I am there in the midst of them.

§ 225. (v. 18).—We have already explained what is meant by the power of loosing and binding which Jesus declared his disciples should possess. The disciples were enlightened already, and were to become more so when they had received full light within the limits of their earthly mission. They themselves were elevated, and were also inspired and guided by superior spirits, and were consequently fitted to judge with wisdom and certainty of the morality of human sentiments. Do you not find Peter convicting Ananias of a fraud, of which he had been mysteriously informed (as a clairaudient medium) by the superior spirits? He was thus enabled to judge with certainty.*

The perspicacity of the Apostles was the result of their personal elevation, and of the counsels which they received from their spirit-guides; for they were all inspired and clairaudient mediums. But Jesus did not say, "I tell you that all that your descendants shall bind on earth from age to age shall be bound in heaven; and all that they shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." The Master

* Acts v. 1-10.

spoke to the Apostles, and not to their degenerate successors. There have been some among their successors (Jews and Gentiles, independently of all outward forms of worship), and there are still some among you, though very few, whose holiness and medianimic faculties enable them to bind and loose in the true sense of these words, with the aid of their spirit-guides.

(V. 19, 20.)—Jesus addressed these words to pious men, all whose thoughts and aspirations were directed towards heaven; and he therefore spoke in reference to celestial blessings, and not of the contemptible interests of your humanity. He promised those who were assembled in his name that whatever they should ask would be granted by God. Have you had no experience of this?

But God will not listen favourably to the prayers which are addressed to him, unless they are uttered, not merely with the lips, but with deep and holy feeling. Let those who ask do so with ardent confidence that they will be heard. It is needless to add that the object sought must be just and holy.

Many will say, "We have prayed earnestly, and fulfilled all these conditions, but we have not been heard." But do you know whether your request was right and fitting? Do you know whether what you prayed for so earnestly might not be injurious to you? How do you know that your Father has not reserved for the eternal life what you asked as a temporal favour?

(V. 20.)—Jesus promised that he would be in the midst of those who assembled in his name. Therefore, whether two or three are assembled together, or whether you are a thousand, the Lord draws near to you, and his ear is opened to your prayers; but for this, it is requisite that you should really be gathered together in his name, with the desire of following his law, and mutually animated by the love of God above all things, and of your neighbour as yourselves.

You know the attractive influence of the sympathetic fluids, which are the links which attract spirits to each

other, who, if not always of the same order, are at least animated by the same sentiments, tastes, and desires. These fluids are drawn together by analogy of kind and nature, which establishes mutual relationships among spirits. When men who are animated by the same thoughts concur in the same work, they meet together, and the sympathies which they attract gather round them. It is thus that vain and frivolous spirits frequent the meetings of vain and frivolous men. If, then, you are closely united by the love of God, and assemble to beseech his mercies; and if you form a more compact and sympathetic chain, he whose protection you seek will respond to your appeal, in the sense that his emissaries will surround you, and pour upon you the treasures of his love for which you pray. But you must not suppose that it is needful for you to assemble at one place to call down upon you the blessings of the Lord. Alas! men who are animated with just and true sentiments of love are so rare, that if only a few men are assembled, there are always some among them who are either indifferent or unworthy; but the Lord counts his sheep, and his faithful ones are dear to him.

§ 226. The Roman Church explains v. 20 from different points of view. Firstly, she claims to possess the genuine interpretation of the sacred writings. It is said, "What reverence is not due to the councils where the whole Church is assembled in her ministers, for enlightenment and truth, the reformation of morals, the establishment of discipline, and the interpretation of the sacred writings! Those are blind indeed who prefer their own opinions to those of these assembled saints."—While I was still speaking, I was suddenly interrupted, and the hand of the medium wrote the following reply.

We stop you here. Jesus said, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." Jesus knew how difficult it is to assemble a larger number of men animated by the same spirit and sentiments. You have but to ask the Church in what council a single religious question has been unanimously accepted without discussion, and often bitter controversy. If, then, in councils composed of men of God, whose judgments were infallible, opinions were divided, and if the members of these same councils maintain their opinions even in the face of a

triumphant majority, what were the influences which guided the members of the sacred college? If opinions were controverted in the councils, how can you distinguish between those inspired by the Holy Spirit and those inspired by Satan? What is the verdict of human wisdom and experience? Let them answer you, and state the reason themselves. Now continue your remarks.

It is added, The Church alone possesses the truth; she alone, assembled in council, is infallible, being alone assisted and inspired by the Holy Spirit.

Reply to the Church: God alone is infallible; your ministers, whether isolated or assembled in council, are fallible like other men, and are likewise subject to the good influences which flow from the Holy Spirit, and to the evil influences proceeding from Satan. Thus they attract to themselves good or evil influences similar in their natures to their sentiments, thoughts, and desires. If you had been infallible through your ministers assembled in the councils, who were aided and inspired by the guidance of the Holy Spirit in their judgments, there would have been unity among them, and unanimity in their decisions, which would all have borne the stamp of charity, tolerance, and universal love. Do not assert that infallibility rests with the majority in your councils. How can you prove it? Has it not been the minority among you which has walked in the steps of the Master who gave you his example, not by words, but by thoughts and actions of gentleness, humility, disinterestedness, frugality, temperance, sobriety, chastity, patience, resignation, charity, and love towards all? Ask yourselves where are the majorities of the men who compose your councils, who have set an example of self-denial and devotion like the Apostles and their first followers? What examples have they set of tolerance and fraternity, embracing all men equally, whether Jews or Gentiles (apart from all external forms of worship), in the bonds of universal brotherhood, and proclaiming to all, from the bottom of their hearts, "We have but one Father in the heavens; we have but one Master and Teacher, the Christ, and we are all brethren."

Is it not the majorities in your councils who exhibit pride, ambition, fanaticism, intolerance; often selfishness, and sometimes even incredulity? Was it, then, the Holy Spirit (the good spirits of light and truth) who aided and inspired them, and presided over their councils, or was it Satan (the evil spirits of error and lying)?

In the second place, they endeavour to frighten men away from the Spiritual Revelation by saying that Satan alone has the power to communicate medianimically.

Do not allow yourselves to be stopped by these interested and monstrous misrepresentations. They arise either from ignorance or dishonesty, and give the lie to the historical traditions of events which have taken place in all ages, and among all nations, and to the successive revelations which the Lord has sent you. Has not the law of magnetic attraction existed from all eternity, in the spiritual as well as in the material universe? Is it not according to the attractive influence of sympathetic fluids that there has been communion between the errant and incarnate spirits in all ages? Is it not thus that errant and incarnate spirits are still drawn together, when they are animated by the same sentiments and desires? Is it not in consequence of the mutual attractions existing between these fluids, according to their various natures, and according as their sentiments and desires are good or evil, that incarnate spirits attract to themselves the secret inspirations of good or evil spirits, or the open influences of medianimic communications? Have not communications between the spiritual and natural worlds, and secret or open medianimic action always existed? Have not these been the means of all revelations among men? Have they not, even from the most remote antiquity, inspired men with the idea of their spiritual origin, and their ideas of the immortality of the soul, and of the Divinity? Have they not led men who were subject to good or evil influences in consequence of their moral position, to the polytheistic ideas which paved the way to monotheism, and which led men to make gods of all the virtues, as well as of all the passions and vices? Have they not been

useful in preparing the Gentiles, with the aid of missionary spirits, for an enlightened belief in the immortality of the soul, the divine unity, monotheism, and reincarnation? Was it not to establish this belief in monotheism among the Hebrews, with whom it was to be deposited, and transmitted to future generations; and to preserve these backward and superstitious people from being misled by the inferior and impure spirits around them, that Moses forbade them to consult the dead, and to seek the truth from them? And did not Moses and the prophets after him, who were commissioned to establish the new era of monotheism, communicate medianimically either openly, or by inspiration, with the Holy Spirit (the good and superior spirits), who aided, inspired, and guided them in the name of the Lord?

The communication between the spiritual and corporeal worlds has existed in all ages, and in all places, before Moses came to accomplish his mission, and before the Catholic Church had published its doctrine of the Fall of the Angels, and of Satan, and consequently of eternal damnation. Has not this communication been continued until your own days? Do you not find sign-posts erected in the course of ages, which tell you, "Stop here. You will find traces of facts identical with those which surprise you. If you search, you will find many others, although the stake, the torture-chamber and the dungeon have hid many from the knowledge of men." Has not the Church drawn from the communication between the two worlds the elements of her canonization of those within her pale, who were not placed beyond her dogmatic teachings and human commands by the medianimic influence? And has not this communication given the Inquisition an excuse for inflicting torture and death on those whom this influence appeared to place outside the Church?

Spiritism is an immutable law established by God from all eternity, and is not essentially a new revelation, viewed as a communication between the two worlds. It is not a mystery newly offered to your acceptance; but it is only an extension given to your days of what has been given before.

It is the liberty of conscience which you enjoy which has permitted facts which were previously stifled to be grouped together to fix your attention. The more frequent communication between free and imprisoned spirits is not a new revelation ; for the revelation which Spiritism brings you is not new in essence, but in the explanations which it offers you in spirit and in truth of your origin, your goal, and the means of attaining it.

If you deny the open or occult medianimic action of the Holy Spirit upon men (the action of the good spirits of light and virtue), and their mutual intercourse, and deny all communication between the spiritual and corporeal worlds except that of Satan (the evil spirits of error and lying), you reject the whole past of humanity ; the traditions of all ages and nations ; all the events which they have recorded ; all the revelations which have been successively given to men ; the Old and New Testaments, and the narratives which they contain of spirit-manifestations ; and the communications between angels (good and purified spirits) with men.

Was it not by a spirit-manifestation that God delivered the tables of the law, containing the Decalogue, to Moses on Mount Sinai ?* Was it not through spirit-manifestations, involving communication between the two worlds, that the Messiah was announced to Abraham ; and afterwards to the Hebrews by the prophets of Israel, who were inspired and clairaudient mediums, the unconscious instruments of the spirits of the Lord. Was it not thus that Jesus, a pure and perfect spirit, incarnated visibly to human eyes, brought to men through his earthly mission, the good news, the law of love, the regenerating doctrine which was not his own, but His that sent him ; the veiled revelation ; the veiled prophecies respecting the future of your planet and its humanity ; and his promises of the advent of the Comforter, who is the Holy Spirit ; and of the Spirit of Truth ; and consequently of spiritual

* Compare the explanations concerning the Ten Commandments, at the end of the work.

communications from the good and purified spirits at the time appointed by the Lord? The signs of this communication have appeared already, and will extend in future over the whole earth.

To deny the secret or open influence of the Holy Spirit (the good spirits of light and truth) upon men, and to admit no communication between the two worlds except that of Satan (the evil spirits of error and lying), is an insult to the justice, goodness, and mercy of God. It is to deny his infinite wisdom, his providence, and its operation among mankind by involving the denial of the immutable law of progress which governs the whole universe, of which the law of suffering and expiation is only the necessary means which your humanity requires in its present stage of moral inferiority.

Thirdly, it is said, "If good spirits can communicate with men, evil spirits can do so likewise. Human reason is fallible, and is therefore incapable of distinguishing with certainty between the errors and lies contained in medianimic communications, and the truth. It is consequently impossible to tell whether this communication between the two worlds is the work of truth, or of error and lying; and it is therefore impossible for man to distinguish with certainty whether the spirit who communicates is the organ of the Holy Spirit or of Satan."

This objection casts equal uncertainty upon the decisions of councils which profess to be under the Holy Spirit; for the moment that there ceased to be unanimity between all the assembled members of the Church, a double influence must have been at work. Which of these was the good influence? That is the question to decide.

There is an infallible criterion for the inspirations of the Church as well as for those of mediums. Conscience, enlightened by Reason, is the true witness of God among men. Search the histories of the Popes and Councils, and examine their decisions, and the feelings of self-denial, disinterestedness, and universal love by which they have been actuated. When you have found them, you may say, "This has really emanated from the Holy Spirit." You can apply the same touchstone to private communications. Wherever you meet with love and charity casting down pride, avarice, and

ambition (the vices which lead to quarrels and heartburnings among mankind), you may say, "This proceeds from the good spirits of the Lord. The mediums were inspired by the Holy Spirit." There is also an infallible criterion in the spiritual order, by which you can investigate the truths of the other world which have been spiritually revealed to you, just as in the case of the truths which present themselves in the scientific order of human science. It is the conscience, under the control of reason, which assures the ultimate triumph of all truth, and the condemnation of everything false and erroneous, in the course of discussion, time, and the progress of intelligence. You should never forget the words of Simeon (Luke ii. 34), concerning Jesus, who is the Light of the World, the Way, the Truth, the Life, the Christ of God, and the Spirit of Truth, as being the personification, completion, and sanctification of the Truth.

Revelations are successive and progressive. Each of them explains and develops that which has preceded it, and is explained and developed by that which succeeds it. Each is always appropriate to the state of intelligence and the needs of the age, and is sent by the will of God, in His infinite wisdom and foresight, to lead your humanity along the ascending path of progress. Under the old Law, Moses and the prophets were inspired, clairaudient and clairvoyant mediums, according to the conditions and necessities of their missions. The revelation brought by Christ was carried on by the Apostles and disciples, who were inspired, clairaudient and clairvoyant mediums, according likewise to the conditions and necessities of the mission which they had to fulfil in the great work of the regeneration of humanity. Thus, in your own days, the revelation which we bring you in the name of the Spirit of Truth, will be carried on in future by sincere and faithful mediums who will receive light and truth medianimically, and diffuse them among mankind. God leaves nothing to chance, and everything is prepared beforehand for the needful incarnations.

The spiritual truths which are revealed will be disputed like every new truth which is proclaimed to men. But this

contradiction will result in their definite triumph, with the progress of time and intelligence, as is always the case under the incessant and progressive action of your physical, mental, and moral development. You will be aided in your task by the open or secret influence of purified spirits, who will labour at your progress under the direction of the Master, both by inspiration and by medianimic communications. You will also be aided by spirits who will incarnate themselves among you on a mission to defend these truths, and to lead men to recognize them by liberty of conscience, reason, and examination, which is the freedom of the Lord. This freedom implies the free use of your reason, the knowledge of causes and effects, the application of knowledge, and the progressive advance of all, in simplicity of heart, humility of mind, disinterestedness, and the desire of progress, guided only by the love of God and the neighbour.

Finally, it has been said, "You should abstain from all communication with the spirit world, and from all medianimic communications, and depend upon the revelations given by Moses and Jesus, and the interpretations which the Church has given of them; and you should reject the spiritual revelation."

Did the revelation given by Moses interfere with the many prophets who rose up in Israel, who were missionary spirits and mediums inspired and guided by the spirits of the Lord whose object was to lead the Israelites to pure beliefs, and to free them from the bonds which tradition and the ambition of the Levites had cast around them? Has not the second revelation which you accepted because it was foretold in the Old Testament, also proclaimed that it did not speak the last word to men, because their intelligence was not able to receive it? Have there not arisen for eighteen hundred years prophets like those of Israel, crying anathema against the heresies which have been introduced into the pure and simple Gospel of Jesus? Was there not a contest between the messengers who preached the pure law, and desired to restore it, and those who had falsified it, and wished to uphold the falsification by material

practices, and human doctrines and commandments? And can you not perceive the signs of your own times? By the second revelation Jesus foretold that at the time of the end of the world, the stars should fall from heaven and the powers of the heavens should be shaken. He promised men that their Father should send them in his name the Comforter, who is the Holy Spirit, to teach them all things, and to bring all that he has said to their remembrance; but that the Spirit of Truth would not speak of himself, but should speak what he had heard, and that he should announce to them things to come; and that the Spirit of Truth should glorify him.

The promised time has come; do you not perceive the spirits of the Lord (the Powers of the Heavens which are shaken, and the stars which fall from heaven on all parts of your planet at once; the Comforter, who is the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Truth) coming to prepare and to accomplish the end of the world of error and lying; to glorify Jesus, and to remind you of all that he has said by explaining and developing it in spirit and in truth; to teach you progressively all truth, and to announce to you things to come? The third revelation thus brought to you by us, the Spirits of the Lord who are sent by the Father in the name of Jesus, is given to you in proportion as you are able to bear it, and will be given to you in future as you become able to bear more. Do not suppose that you have yet received the full revelation. The spirits of the Lord have come to prepare for the advent of Jesus among you, when you shall be able and worthy to receive him who shall come to show you the *unveiled* truth, of which he, the Spirit of Truth, is the completion and sanctification.

MATTHEW, CHAP. XVIII.—VERSES 21-35.

Pardon of Injuries.

(21) Then Peter came to him, and said, Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? up to seven times? (22) And Jesus said to him, I say not to thee up to seven times, but to seventy times seven. (23) Therefore shall the kingdom of the heavens be

likened unto a king, who desired to take account with his servants. (24) And when he had begun to reckon, there was brought to him a man who owed him ten thousand talents. (25) And as he was unable to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made. (26) The servant therefore fell down and did homage to him, saying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. (27) And the lord of that servant had compassion on him, and released him, and remitted him the loan. (28) But this servant went out, and found one of his fellow-servants, who owed him a hundred denarii, and he seized and choked him, saying, Pay me what thou owest. (29) Then his fellow-servant fell down at his feet, and besought him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. (30) And he would not, but went and cast him into prison, until he should pay the debt. (31) And when his fellow-servants saw what was done, they were much grieved, and went and informed their lord of all that had happened. (32) Then his lord called for him, and said to him, O wicked servant, I remitted to thee all that debt when thou besoughtest me. (33) Should not thou also have had compassion on thy fellow-servant, even as I had compassion on thee? (34) And his lord was angry, and gave him over to the torturers, until he should pay all that was owing to him. (35) So also shall my heavenly Father do to you, if each of you do not from your hearts forgive his brother his transgressions.

§ 227. Never call the offender to account, but be always ready to forgive him, whatever may have been his errors. Let your indulgence be unbounded. Never forget that the Lord will judge you by the same standard that you have judged your brethren. Therefore, absolve them from their debt by giving them time to pay it, as the Lord has done. Do not forget that you who have been offended, or to whom some obligation is due, have also offended your Father, and owe him vastly more than anything that can be due to yourselves. Therefore, if you wish him to be merciful to you, be merciful to others; if you would be forgiven, forgive; and never cease to repeat from the bottom of your hearts that great saying which forms the key to all teachings, "Never do to another what you would not have done to yourself," and its corollary, "but, on the contrary, do unto others whatever you would wish to be done to yourself." All the devotion of fraternal love is comprised in these few words.

Jesus had recourse to a parable which was appropriate to the manners and intelligence of the age, to impress the masses forcibly with the necessity of pardoning offences, and the consequences, purposely veiled under a material form, of

the neglect or refusal to pardon. If you do not forgive the errors of your brethren, but make them feel the full weight of your anger, the Lord is a wise judge who will hold you responsible, and his indulgence will not be extended to him who has been wanting in mercy. You may be sure that the neglect or refusal to pardon offences arises from selfishness and coldheartedness which often springs from pride; and these vices are powerful roots which chain you down to the flesh. Use all your efforts to extirpate them, for they are the cause of expiations and reincarnations, and are an obstacle to the spirit rising from the inferior worlds, as long as he is incapable of always and unceasingly pardoning his brother.

MATTHEW, CHAP. XIX.—VERSES 1-9. MARK,
CHAP. X.—VERSES 1-9.

The Law of Marriage.

Matth. xix. (1) And it came to pass that when Jesus had ended these sayings, he departed from Galilee, and came into the boundaries of Judæa beyond Jordan. (2) And large crowds followed him, and he healed them there. (3) And the Pharisees came to him, tempting him, and saying, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every reason? (4) And he answered and said to them, Have you not read that he who made them from the beginning made them male and female? (5) And said, Therefore shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife, and the two shall be one flesh. (6) So they are no longer two, but one flesh. What therefore God has united, let not man divide. (7) They say to him, Why then did Moses command to give her a writing of divorcement, and send her away? He saith to them, (8) Moses for the hardness of your hearts permitted you to put away your wives; but from the beginning it was not so. (9) And I say to you that whoever shall put away his wife, except on account of fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery, and whoever shall marry her that is put away committeth adultery.

Mark x. (1) And he rose up from thence, and came into the coasts of Judæa, through the country beyond Jordan, and again multitudes travelled to him, and, as he was accustomed, he taught them again. (2) And the Pharisees came to him, asking him if it was lawful for a man to put away his wife; tempting him. (3) And he answered and said to them, What did Moses command you? (4) And they say, Moses commanded that a certificate of divorcement should be written, and she should be put away. (5) And Jesus answered and said to them, He wrote you this order on account of the hardness of your hearts. (6) But from the beginning of the Creation, God made them male and female. (7) Therefore shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife, and the two shall be one flesh. (8) So they are no longer two, but one flesh. (9) Therefore what God hath united, let not man divide.

§ 228. You may here refer to vol. i. § 84, pp. 211 and 212. In replying to the Pharisees, Jesus explained, as a veiled lesson for men, the union of man and woman both as regards the divine law, and the civil, or human law; and added, "What God hath united, let not man divide." These words were useful for the present and preparatory to the future. Their accomplishment was only designed to take place as the result of the moral purification of your humanity. They are still sayings of the future to yourselves. The influences of civilization and progress have prepared you for this work of moral purification. Progress has taken place slowly and painfully, but still there has been progress; and the time is approaching, though still distant, when man shall no longer divide what God has joined.

You know that every revelation is appropriate to the state of intelligence and the needs of the age, its object and result being to serve the present, and to prepare for the future; and the veil which covers each of them is designed to be progressively raised by the following revelations; for your humanity continues to receive what it is able to bear, in proportion to the development of your moral and intellectual progress, until the day when Jesus will himself come to show you the unveiled Truth.

We have already (§ 55, p. 104 and foll.) glanced at the emblematic character of the Creation as recorded in Genesis. The formation of man and woman by the hands of the Creator, like a clay statue moulded by a potter, is only an emblem. It had no other meaning except to prefigure the intimate union of the male and female, which were created two only in order that they should not be separated. Moses knew the mysterious origin of the soul by intuition and medianimic revelations. He was inspired and guided by superior spirits who revealed to him under a veil what he knew of the origin of man. By representing man and woman as issuing from the hands of their Creator, he gave a greater importance both to the work and to its fall, and opened a vast horizon to the desire for improvement. By saying that God created man in his own image, and created

them male and female, he raised man and woman in their own eyes ; and gave them the desire for good, and the knowledge of what they might become. He was acquainted with the origin of the soul, which proceeds from the universal principle at the will of the Lord, and is destined by continual progress to acquire a degree of purity which assimilates it, in a sense, to its Creator.

When Jesus quoted the emblematic expressions of Genesis, and added, "Therefore they are no longer two, but one flesh : what God hath united, let not man divide ;" he showed men the indivisible character which, according to the divine law, should rule over the union of man and woman to fulfil their pilgrimage through the earth together, united in body and soul, and to fulfil all the duties which this union brings with it. The divine law is not material only ; it is also moral. As regards human nature, marriage is nothing more than the union of two bodies for the purpose of reproduction. Therefore let men keep themselves pure while submitting to the laws of their animal nature, and the justice of God will preserve them. But side by side with the divine law in the material world, is the divine law in the moral order ; the law of love which you see working and developing, according to the immutable law of progress in all the kingdoms of nature. In the animal kingdom you see the law of love acting at first promiscuously, and then in some species exhibiting preliminary signs of the intimate union of bodies and souls ; and thus leading towards the accomplishment of the emblematic words of Genesis, relative to man and woman.

Let the union of man and woman among you be at once free and indissoluble, according to the true spiritual sense of the expressions which Jesus quoted. Let it be both free and indissoluble according to the natural law in the sight of God, by the indissoluble union of bodies and minds. Let it freely bear the fruits of justice and chastity, under the influence and practice of the law of love, between two independent, free, and responsible creatures, in the fulfilment of all conjugal and parental duties towards spirits who will come to incarnate themselves, and to fulfil new experiences.

We now proceed to consider the question of the Pharisees respecting divorce, and the reply of Jesus.

■ When the need of establishing societies began to be felt, and pastoral nations originated, the multiplicity of children became a source of wealth; and the barren woman was persecuted, or even destroyed. On account of the abuses to which the necessities of population had given rise, Moses legalized divorce, although the same reasons for rapid increase had already ceased to exist at that period. But men, proud in everything, had come to regard the number of their children as a personal merit of their own; and the barren woman was therefore exposed to every kind of ill-treatment. It was needful to avoid the immorality to which the abuse of the law of divorce led; for men believed that they had a right to take a wife, and desert her when they were tired of her. To prevent this, Jesus gave the law of adultery a wider significance (Matth. xix. 9).

Even in your days, when you are civilized, but not purified, would not unlimited freedom of divorce be a cover for immorality, and for legalized corruption of morals? Christ, by commanding that man should not separate what God had united, struck at the roots of the abuses prevalent at the time, and imposed a limit on the corruption of future ages; but he did not condemn two antipathetic spirits to torture each other.

It is contrary to the divine law to compel two such spirits to consort with each other daily; but this must not be taken as an excuse for misconduct, for it is in accordance with the words of Jesus. Jesus said, "What God has united, let not man divide;" but he did not say, "Compel those to live together who cannot approach each other without a mutual aversion which leads them into faults contrary to the law of charity." Divorce could only exist before the Lord when one of two antipathetic spirits leads the other into evil, by word and example; for this is adultery, in the moral order. The bodies of men and women are nothing in the eyes of the Lord, for God made man and woman from a spiritual, and not from a corporeal, point of view. The body is only the instrument given to the spirit for its earthly

experiences in the path of reparation and progress ; and it is therefore the spirit that men and women should preserve unstained. Does not the adulterous man or woman lead the spirit united with them to commit the same fault ; whether it is adultery of the body through abuse of the flesh, or adultery of the spirit by failing in the law of justice, love, and charity, by word and example ? Is it not better to separate the branch from the tree than to allow it to bear evil fruit ? Remember that marriage among yourselves frequently loses all the sacred character which it ought to possess, and becomes nothing more than the fulfilment of a business contract, in which the two parties are more or less scrupulous in the fulfilment of their obligations.

Civil laws have followed the mission of Jesus, like those given by Moses to the Hebrew nation. They have varied in their nature, like everything in the moral and intellectual order which emanates from your imperfect humanity, according to the time, the place, and the intelligence of the age. They are designed to prevent, to repress, or to remedy abuses, and to lead you forward. Progress advances, in spite of oscillations or reactionary opposition, under the influence and guidance of successive revelations, and by the secret or open impulse of the Spirits of the Lord (the Providence of God among you) and of the spirits incarnated on missions.

The civil laws of divorce and marriage arose from your social renovation of 1789, which was one of the greatest efforts of your humanity in the path of progress ; and they have lasted till your own days. They have undergone variations due to the incessant struggle between progressive and reactionary influences ; but the law of progress is immutable, like everything which proceeds from God. The law of marriage needs to be deeply considered, and reconstructed according to the natural law of God ; but before this, it is needful that the passions and cupidity of men shall have given place to higher feelings. It is needful that the union of man and woman should be understood to be a great and holy thing in the eyes of the Lord ; and that men should understand the vastness of the duties which they are

bound to fulfil when they take upon themselves the responsibilities of marriage; duties which they are not permitted to fail in, and which God protects with his love; for it is the consecration of the laws of nature. But society is still too much entrammelled by prejudices, abuses, and vices for this reform to take place. It must be the work of time and progress; every day brings its grain of sand to add to the preceding; and each grain of sand will at length set an impenetrable barrier to the vices of humanity. But you must wait till the wall is built, and not risk the destruction of the good that has already been attained, by building too fast. Men, return to what you ought to be, the children of the Lord; and then man will no longer divide what God has united. Yes, that which Moses announced, under a veil, in the name of the Lord, "and they twain shall be one flesh," must be and shall be fulfilled; and Christ sanctified these words by saying, "Therefore they are no longer two, but one flesh. What God hath united, let not man divide." Marriage should take place, as the consequence and result of your moral purification, under spiritual influence; a free choice, freely accepted in the sight of God, and freely maintained, until the death of one of the parties; a mutual agreement and aid which nothing can dissolve; a support in the experiences of life, with the fixed desire of maintaining it when it has been interrupted on earth, in the errant state, and in that life which lies before you in the future, where, as Jesus said, "there is no longer husband or wife;" for the union contracted on earth is a powerful bond which eternally unites those who have formed it by a sympathy which nothing can alter.

The religious benediction was long the only form of consecration of marriage; and it will still be so. In ancient times, before the advent of Moses, the appeal to the blessing of God was made by the parents, and the betrothed couple. In the Hebrew times, from the advent of Moses, to the appearance of Jesus on earth, a patriarchal formula had been already established, and the religious benediction took a more definite form. Was it not fitting to feast the relations and friends? and the ostentation of brilliant weddings began.

After the advent of Christ, and during the early ages of Christianity, the nuptial benediction took a more religious character. The priest began by invoking the blessings of the Father of all on the young couple ; but, little by little, this custom degenerated into a mere form. The lively faith which brought to the Church all who were interested in the pair, that they might unite in more earnest prayer, gave place to the thirst for show, and the pride of luxury and ostentation which corrupts all the sentiments of humanity. Weddings became occasions of feasting and rejoicing ; and men no longer cared for the sympathy of the guests, and the fervent prayers which they offered up to the Protector of the weak. They invited the happy, and counted the number of guests ; and the blessing of the priest became only a necessary formality.

The period upon which you are about to enter, though still far distant, will lead up to the time when, before God, in the silence of nature, and the sincerity of his conscience, man will invoke on himself and his companion the blessings of the Lord, humbly asking for strength to bear their trials courageously, and for strength and intelligence to elevate the children whom they may be called upon to introduce to life, morally still more than materially. But there will be no noise or feasting ; only the prayers of parents and chosen friends : silence and darkness, purity of heart, and hope in God. Then the union of man and woman will be according to the law of God, both free and indissoluble by the divine link of the law of love.

O men, so proud of your civilization, how corrupt is your society, and how few of the merits which you attribute to it does it possess ! It is a mummy, loaded with golden relics, hiding its shame and rottenness under robes of silk and satin. Yet it must still remain thus for a long time ; for your humanity must be led on by slow degrees to the point of moral purification when the purified spirit will have no need of restraints, because he will seek for the companion who is suited to him, and, guided by love and charity, will not cast her off from mere caprice.

§ 229. How should Spiritists act if the religious benediction according to the outward worship in which they were born should be refused to them?

Why do you need men to call down upon your heads the religious benediction which they refuse to you? Render homage to the Creator, and implore him to bestow his blessing upon you. You are surrounded by *Levites*; good spirits, and divine messengers ready to bless you in the name of God. As we have told you, marriage, according to the natural law of God, and apart from all religious formalism, consists in free accord, freely accepted and maintained until the death of one of the parties, in the union of bodies and souls, for the performance of the law of love and charity, and the fulfilment of all the duties which it imposes, as between man and woman, and also with regard to the children whom they may be called upon to usher into life. But you should always avoid scandal, although your actions are not judged by your Father as by yourselves; and conform yourselves, so far as is humanly possible, to the laws under which you live, both as regards the religious benediction, and the civil regulations respecting marriage. You may always be sure that these laws will be modified when your natures are modified; but endeavour at once to practise the natural law of God, by a union which shall be both free and indissoluble; and thus obey the natural law before the moral purification of your humanity has established its dominion; and await its maturity. If blindness and intolerance should lead men to refuse you their religious benediction, show them that the words of Jesus are fulfilled in you, "They are no longer two but one flesh; what God hath united, let not man divide." Do this by the blessing which you shall have brought down from your Creator, which shall be given to you in his name by the good spirits who surround you, and practise marriage in accordance with the natural law of God.

If you should be obliged to set this example, after having done all that was humanly possible to avoid scandal, it will be as a lamp set to illumine the course of your humanity in

the future path which will see the accomplishment of the Master's words, which we have just explained in spirit and in truth.

MARK, CHAP. X.—VERSES 10—12. MATTHEW,
CHAP. XIX.—VERSES 10—12.

The Conditions of Marriage.

Mark x. (10) And in the house, his disciples asked him again about this. (11) And he said to them, Whoever shall divorce his wife and marry another, committeth adultery on account of her. (12) And if a woman shall put away her husband, and marry another, she committeth adultery.

Matth. xix. (10) His disciples say to him, If such is the case of the man with his wife, it is not expedient to marry. (11) And he said to them, All cannot receive this saying, but those to whom it is given. (12) For there are eunuchs who were born thus from their mother's womb; and there are eunuchs who were made eunuchs by men; and there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs on account of the kingdom of the heavens. He who is able to receive it, let him receive it.

§ 230. The answer of Jesus to the Pharisees, respecting the divine law of the union of man and woman, had made an impression on the minds of the disciples; and as soon as they were alone with him, they questioned him again on the subject.

Jesus alluded, in thought, to that period of progress and moral purification when human laws will be modified, because your natures will be modified; and the union of man and woman will be free and indissoluble. Then will the man or woman who leaves his or her spouse, and marries another, be declared adulterous, as having broken the natural law of God by violating the concord, freely accepted, and to be freely maintained, until the death of one of the parties. The Master's words and his concealed thought were not intended to be understood until the predicted time of the New Revelation.

(Matth. xix. 10.)—Do not wonder at the disciples speaking thus; for being incarnate, they were influenced by Hebrew prejudices; and regarded it as a burden to be obliged to keep even the wife whom they had chosen.

But they did not speak thus without an object. Many believe that they speak from their own minds when they really speak under the influence of inspiration. This was the case with the disciples.

They had received inspiration, so much the more easily because it was in accordance with the personal ideas and prejudices due to surrounding influences. Their words were designed to lead to a lesson which when given over to human interpretations in its veiled form, should be useful both to the present and to the future. It was a lesson to be explained and developed by the present revelation, which should teach men the reasons for abstention from marriage ; and also lay down a line of conduct to be pursued for the union according to the divine law.

(Matth. xix. 11, 12.)—We will now reveal the meaning of the words of Jesus in the verses quoted, by his authority.

You know that man chooses his experiences when he assumes the body ; and you can therefore understand (compare §§ 2, 3, vol. i. p. 5 and foll.) that the spirit, before commencing a new earthly existence, is destined either to family life, or to sterility. Thus the tendencies of the flesh are often a trial which he must endure, if he would conquer them ; and it is therefore not given to all to enter upon marriage.

“There are eunuchs who were born thus from their mother’s womb.” As the spirit has chosen its experiences, it should resist the temptations of the flesh, and some who have to suffer this trial, assume a body which is incapable of answering to the needs of the spirit. We say the spirit, for the *material* spirit shares in the sensations of the flesh ; and it is often this tendency of the spirit which leads the body into evil courses. Have you not heard of errant spirits who are incessantly pursued by the necessities of the body ; needs which they cannot satisfy, and which are a torture to them ? These tendencies may continue in incarnation, the spirit having as a punishment assumed a body, which cannot conform to them.

By a material spirit, you may understand a spirit having

tendencies towards matter, and feeling its influence, even when disengaged. The spirit assumes a perispit suited to its development ; but the perispit of a spirit who is little advanced, and consequently subject to the allurements of matter, is very gross, and, though invisible to you, resembles the substances which compose your material bodies. The spirit incarnated under such conditions may be regarded as material, in the sense that its tastes, tendencies, and perispitric constitution assimilate it to matter.

Those who were born eunuchs are those whom their nature separates from the needs of the flesh. They should understand the object of the trial which they have to suffer, and which they have chosen ; and ought not to allow any personal interest whatever to induce them to condemn a woman to live under their yoke. Human nature and its necessities are one of the means of progress placed at man's disposal, and therefore everything can conduce to his progress, if well directed.

Such men have failed grievously in their former existences by yielding to the most culpable tendencies ; and have failed both in the duties of union according to the divine law, and in those of family life. They should strive to emerge victorious from the trial, and draw from it the intelligence and strength to conquer these tendencies of the flesh ; and thus turn what might be a torture into a means of moral purification and progress. They may thus give the spirit the predominance over matter, and prepare themselves by a life of chastity for marriage and family life in another existence, according to the law of God. Is there anything surprising in this trial ? Everything important in human life is designed to efface past faults, and to guard against future lapses.

"There are eunuchs who were made eunuchs by men." This was a custom which prevailed very widely at the period when Jesus spoke to men, and lasted for a long time afterwards. Apart from this, some have become impotent from errors, the effects of which are felt throughout life. Do you not sometimes meet with such instances, even amid your own civilization ?

Let these barbarous customs and odious actions which disgrace your humanity disappear from the world. But let those who thus suffer regard their condition as only an expiation designed to efface their past faults, and consequently as a trial which they must endure ; and let those who are themselves to blame, understand that they have failed grievously in their experiences.

Let all such abstain from marriage, and strive to overcome the tendencies and lusts of the flesh, that what would otherwise be a torture may become a means of moral purification and progress, and thus prepare them for marriage and family life, in another existence.

“There are some who have made themselves eunuchs on account of the kingdom of the heavens.” Those only who feel themselves sufficiently strong to accept the conditions of union according to the divine law, ought to marry ; but let not him who is only led by a fickle and changeable spirit, and who does not care for family ties, marry. In short, let no one marry who is too weak to resist the temptations of the flesh, and the failings of humanity ; for he would mislead both his companion and her children ; and would have to give an account of their sufferings, their unhappiness, and even of their faults, if they should happen to commit any on account of his evil example. We speak here of the woman as well as the man ; and she ought likewise to renounce her desires under like circumstances.

Those alone make themselves eunuchs on account of the kingdom of the heavens, who do not feel themselves sufficiently strong to fulfil the conditions of marriage and family life, and therefore renounce them ; and in so doing have struggled with their own desires rather than lead others into evil. For this reason men and women ought not to enter upon so serious an action unless they feel themselves strong enough faithfully to fulfil its duties to the last, whether the marriage is fertile or sterile. The responsibility of a man is great when he calls to himself guilty spirits, to redeem, lead, and help to progress ; but great also is the happiness of those who have rightly understood their task

in marriage and in family life. They have brought back wandering sheep to the fold, and the Master regards them as his good servants.

"He who is able to receive it, let him receive it." Jesus expressed himself thus, partly because his words were not to be taken only in their literal, but also in a figurative sense ; and might be understood rightly or imperfectly ; while, on the other hand, he did not wish to develop his thought, and to give a set form to his discourse. The time, prejudices, and the state of morals and intelligence of the age required his words to be veiled, that they might be useful to the present, and preparatory to the future. Human interpretations are the condition and means of moral and intellectual progress ; and even the abuses which arise from misinterpretations fulfil a temporary use.

Some, like Origen, have understood the Master's words literally. Others have taken them figuratively, and have lived in a state of voluntary and perpetual continence as the best means of obtaining the kingdom of the heavens ; and this false interpretation led to the celibacy of the clergy, and of all the monastic and religious orders of both sexes.*

But even these abuses have not been without their use. These religious associations were the sanctuaries of primitive times, to which the weak and persecuted fled, and where the arts and sciences were developed, and protected from the violence of the multitude, and of the powerful. They were asylums which were open to all whom brutality would have destroyed, but since the causes which rendered them useful have become changed, or have ceased, they should also have been modified.

We do not object to associations of men or women who do not feel sufficient energy to live in the turmoil of the world, and who seek in the silence of retreat the calm needful to cultivate and develop faculties which would be useful to all, but which the noise of the world would interfere with. But these communities should be formed by

* This appears to have been necessary to correct the immorality of the ancient world by a reactionary movement.—TRANSL.

those of similar feelings and tastes, and with unselfishness and generosity. They should be conservatories where delicate plants may find the temperature needful to their development, that they may yield ripe and savoury fruits, under favourable circumstances, which may be useful to the world. But their liberty should be complete, and they should be under no restraint, except the same desire for progress; and those who have developed their powers in silence, and feel themselves strong enough to return to their families, should be free to do so when it seems good to them. What we would desire is liberty of mind and action, always employed for the profit and progress of all.

You may look upon those who seclude themselves to avoid natural laws and family cares as selfish or fanatical. Such men often fall into worse delinquencies in the shade of the cloister, and under the cover of piety, than those who are led astray by the vices of society. Their errors are worse, because they have no admissible excuse, and because in most cases it was laziness or some other selfish motive which led them to adopt a course of life as unprofitable to themselves as to others. Such men are useless members of the great human family; dead branches which injure the tree by absorbing sap from the living branches around them. They do not labour for the kingdom of the heavens, and their sacrifice, which profits nobody, becomes the very cause of their condemnation.

§ 231. It is asserted that Jesus taught that voluntary and perpetual continence, embraced for the sake of God, is a gift of God himself, and the only virginity which he promises to bless; and that Jesus approved and advised vows of celibacy. This has led the Church to make celibacy obligatory on the priesthood, and on the members of all the monastic and religious orders of both sexes.

The starting-point is good, but the maxim is false. We have already explained the real meaning of the words which the Church has misunderstood, and therefore misapplied. Voluntary celibacy is good in the eyes of the Lord whenever it proceeds from a pure and unselfish motive. The man or woman who does not feel strong enough to fulfil the conditions of family life worthily, and with the needful disin-

terestedness and self-denial, does well in the sight of God to abstain from it, at whatever material or carnal personal sacrifice ; but every one should always remain free to enter upon marriage and family life, if he feels himself strong enough to fulfil the obligations according to the divine law. It is then both a necessity and a duty, for it is the consecration of the laws of nature. Although those who feel themselves too weak to fulfil these duties should abstain from marriage, yet this should not lead them to withdraw themselves from the great human family ; and still less should they pride themselves upon it under the influence either of mysticism, idleness, fanaticism, selfishness, or ambition. Where would be the merit then ? It would nourish pride and wandering thoughts in the heart, and lead to a misplaced confidence.

Moses told you that God said, "It is not good for man to be alone ;" for where one would be able to control his passions, a thousand would yield to them in secret, and would become hypocrites. Men, you are dependent on one another, and need each other's mutual aid and support. Do not undo the work of God ; but rouse yourselves, sluggards, to contribute your labour to the general enterprise, for each man is as a drop of water in a river which flows without ceasing.

The Church has misinterpreted the words of Jesus, by imposing the vow of celibacy upon those who feel strong enough to enter upon married and family life, but who avoid the laws of nature, and seclude themselves as a means of gaining the kingdom of the heavens. Jesus promised a reward to free and voluntary virginity, proceeding from a pure and disinterested motive which should be active and useful ; but not to indolent idleness. Some among you have won the prize, but how many have seen it crumble to dust when they imagined it to be within their grasp !

Thus you condemn celibacy as taught by the Church, which she has imposed upon the priests and the religious orders in addition to the two commandments which Christ declared to contain all the law and the prophets.

Thrice yes ; for priests, like other men, ought to be allowed to marry if they feel strong enough to fulfil the obligations of the natural law of God. They ought to set the example of all the virtues which they preach ; and what is the use of their perpetual, enforced, and obligatory celibacy ? A union according to the divine law would have saved many from yielding to the allurements of the flesh, and thus falling into hypocrisy ; and also from the disgrace and condemnation inflicted by your human justice when their delinquencies have been made known. How do they practise the laws of the family ? They are away from their firesides, and most of them close their hearts to all the softer emotions, and lead a factitious life which grows up in them, and ends in selfishness, pride, and the dwarfing of the faculties of the soul. They are useless servants, who create a useless labour ; and as they do not understand the law, they make a law for themselves. Those who are only priests by profession, as others are writers, shoemakers, musicians, or anything else, and whose sanctity is a means of rising from the humble sphere in which they would otherwise have lived, make it a stalking-horse to reach the first step of the dangerous ladder of honours and fortune. They are blind guides who lead others into the darkness in which they walk themselves.

But far be it from us to condemn the humble pastor who tends his sheep in the truth and sincerity of his ignorance, or to condemn the falsity of the path in which he walks. His intention being pure, purifies his actions ; and his crown will be adorned with the flowers which the proud believed they were gathering for themselves.

Let those who feel themselves strong against the flesh, and weak in respect to family obligations, fight bravely, but let them remain in the midst of the battlefield ; for how can they be victorious if they fly from it ? Everyone ought to prove himself, and only to choose his course of life, whatever it may be, with a firm desire and resolve to succeed in the struggle.

What is to be thought of the religious orders who practise hospitality and charity, and on whom celibacy is also obligatory ?

It will be rendered to each according to his works ; for the work springs from the thought ; and selfishness can only lead to unfruitful works.

Ought these religious orders to disappear, or to be modified in accordance with the light, activity, and liberty of the new era ?

They should become modified ; for you will see charitable associations spring up and multiply themselves infinitely ; but they will all follow the one simple and generous course, acting for the general good in the liberty of the Lord, under the regulation of the laws of liberty, and human fraternity ; and not for the good of each personally, which is a mystic usury condemned by the Lord.

§ 232. It has been asserted that Matth. xix. 10-12 were interpolated by some Gnostic or Manichean, who desired to avail himself of a reference to marriage to introduce a pretended testimony in favour of the opinions of his sect on celibacy.

Such interpretations arose from the ignorance of men who were unable to understand the thought of Christ, because of the veil of the letter, which intentionally covered the spirit. Man is always led astray by pride and the desire of novelty, and when he is not guided by pure sentiments he shuts himself up in darkness. Nevertheless, all such interpretations of revealed truth likewise attack received errors and are always useful. When the time has come, the truth will arise pure and victorious, leaving the ground at its feet literally strewn with the errors and lies which have fallen around it. Fear not, therefore, the attacks of all the free-thinkers, whose freedom consists in destroying everything without reflection, although they are unable to replace it. They are sowing, and you will reap. What was secret is now known, and what was hidden is now revealed.

MATTHEW, CHAP. XIX.—VERSES 13-15. MARK,
CHAP. X.—VERSES 13-16. LUKE, CHAP. XVIII.
VERSES 15-17.

Humility the source of all Virtue.

Matt. xix. (13) Then little children were brought to him, that he might lay his hands upon them, and bless them, and the disciples

reproved them. (14) But Jesus said, Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of the heavens. (15) And he laid his hands upon them, and departed thence.

Mark x. (13) And they brought to him little children, that he might touch them, and the disciples rebuked those who brought them. (14) And Jesus beholding it, was displeased, and said to them, Suffer the little children to come to me, and do not forbid them, for of such is the kingdom of God. (15) Verily I say unto you, If any one shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall by no means enter into it. (16) And he took them in his arms, and laid his hands upon them, and blessed them.

Luke xviii. (15) And they brought to him even new-born children that he should touch them, and when the disciples saw it, they rebuked them. (16) And Jesus called to them, and said, Suffer the little children to come unto me, and do not forbid them, for of such is the kingdom of God. (17) Verily I say to you, If any one shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall by no means enter it.

§ 233. We have already (§ 198, vol. ii. p. 169, and foll.) given you sufficient explanations on this subject. Jesus repeated his words to impress them more strongly on the minds of his disciples. It was the same thought expressed in other terms at a different time and place ; simplicity of heart and humility of mind are at once the foundation, source, means, and path to virtue, purification, and progress, which lead to purity and perfection.

LUKE, CHAP. XVIII.—VERSES 1-8.

Parable of the Widow and the Unjust Judge.

(1) And he also repeated a parable to them, that one ought always to pray, and not to despond, saying, (2) There was a judge in a certain town, who neither feared God, nor regarded man. (3) And there was a widow in this town, and she came to him, saying, Avenge me on my adversary. (4) And he would not do it for a time, but afterwards he said to himself, Though I neither fear God nor regard man, (5) Yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest she weary me out at last by coming. (6) And the Lord said, Hear what the unjust judge saith. (7) And shall not God avenge his own elect, who cry day and night to him, and have compassion on them? (8) I say unto you that he will avenge them speedily. When the Son of Man cometh, will he find faith on the earth?

§ 234. Here you have an instance of an unprincipled and unjust man yielding to importunity, and doing justice to the widow (it is said, justice only); and how much more may you hope that the Lord will grant your persevering and

fervent requests, provided that they are also just! The spirit is not limited by time; and the body alone feels the moments of its duration. Do not trouble yourselves about the delay in the accomplishment of your wishes; not one of your words is lost; and you will perceive its effects where time knows no limits.

(V. 7.)—Each will receive according to his works when the time has come; and thus justice will be awarded to each; reward to the just, and punishment to the guilty. The spirit-revelation has taught you what this reward and punishment mean.

(V. 8.)—The justice of the Lord is exerted continually; and let those who would experience its sweetness endeavour to rank themselves among the elect; that is, among those who follow the traces of the Master. The Son of Man has been among you, and is still the personification of his moral teaching. Christ alludes to the advent of the new era of Spiritism which is opening before you, and which is destined to prepare for the coming of Jesus in all his spiritual glory, as the visible sovereign of his purified creatures on your earth, which will then likewise be purified; and the new era must re-establish his law as it emanated from himself.

The words, "When the Son of Man cometh, will he find faith in the earth?" signify that the pure law, personified by the Son of Man, will not find faith when it is proclaimed by the Spirits of the Lord, the organs of the Spirit of Truth. You can judge of this; the Son of Man has come to re-establish his kingdom among you; and do you think that he finds faith on earth?

It has been objected that there is no logical connection between the two clauses of v. 8.

Those who think so do not reflect that these words apply directly to the justice which is to be done to the elect; that is, to those who possess true faith, manifested in their works, and follow the steps of Jesus; as well as to those who have no active faith leading to works of justice, love, and charity, and therefore wander from his steps, and heap physical and

moral persecution on the elect. If there is not faith on earth, there will be punishment; this is the natural consequence.

LUKE, CHAP. XVIII.—VERSES 9-14.

The Pharisee and the Tax-gatherer.

(9) And he spake this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others. (10) Two men went up into the Temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a tax-gatherer. (11) The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself: God, I thank thee that I am not as other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax-gatherer. (12) I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I have. (13) And the tax-gatherer standing afar off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be gracious to me, the sinner. (14) I say unto you, this man went home justified rather than the other. For every one who exalteth himself shall be humbled, but he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

§ 235. Pride is man's bitterest enemy, and that which penetrates deepest into his heart, and infixes itself most obstinately. He who regards himself as superior to his brother in any respect is guilty of pride. What merit does he possess in the eyes of the Lord? However strictly he may observe the law, he only fulfils a strict duty. Consequently, he commits a serious fault in presuming to imagine that his Creator is pledged to reward him for his supposed merits. He sins against charity in judging his brother harshly; for, notwithstanding appearances, the brother who appears to be most miserable or even guilty may have the purest heart. At least, he may possess that humility which leads him to estimate himself justly, and enables him to repress evil. Be severe towards yourselves, and mild and indulgent towards others.

"The tax-gatherer went home justified." He had done justice to himself by acknowledging his infirmity; he was therefore on the right path; for an evil that is recognised ceases to exist the moment that a remedy is applied. The Pharisee was not justified. He had been guilty of an act of ostentation, and had been wanting in charity towards one of

his brethren, instead of humbling himself before the Lord, on account of his faults, however slight they might have been. Pride is a grave fault, and will be punished ; but sincere humility is the best means of reformation ; for it leads to progress.

MATTHEW, CHAP. XIX.—VERSES 16-26 ; MARK,
CHAP. X.—VERSES 17-27 ; LUKE, CHAP. XVIII.
VERSES 18-27.

The Rich Young Man.

Matth. xix. (16) And behold one came and said to him, Good Teacher, what good thing shall I do that I may have age-long life ; (17) And he said to him, Why callest thou me good ? no one is good, save one : God. But if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments. (18) He saith to him, Which ? And Jesus said to him, Thou shalt not kill ; thou shalt not commit adultery ; thou shalt not steal ; thou shalt not bear false witness ; (19) Honour thy father and thy mother, and love thy neighbour as thyself. (20) The young man saith to him, All these things have I observed from my youth ; in what do I still fall short ? (21) And Jesus said to him, If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell thy possessions, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven ; and come, follow me. (22) And when the young man heard the speech, he went away sad, for he had great possessions. (23) And Jesus said to his disciples, Verily I say to you that with difficulty shall a rich man enter into the kingdom of the heavens. (24) And again I say unto you, It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. (25) And when his disciples heard it, they were greatly astonished, saying, Who then can be saved ? (26) And Jesus looked upon them, and said, To men this is impossible, but to God all things are possible.

Mark x. (17) And as he set forth on the road, there came one running and kneeling to him, and asking him, Good Teacher, what shall I do that I may inherit age-long life ? (18) And Jesus said to him, Why callest thou me good ? no one is good, save God alone. (19) Thou knowest the commandments, Do not commit adultery ; do not kill ; do not steal ; do not bear false witness ; honour thy father and thy mother. (20) And he answered and said to him, Teacher, I have observed all these things from my youth. (21) And Jesus looking upon him, loved him, and said to him, One thing is wanting in thee ; go and sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor ; and come and take up the cross, and follow me. (22) And he being troubled at the saying went away sorrowful, for he had large possessions. (23) And Jesus looking round said to his disciples, How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God ! (24) And the disciples wondered at his sayings. And Jesus again answered, and said to them, Children, how hardly shall they that trust in riches enter into the kingdom of God ! (25) It is easier for a camel to pass through the needle's eye than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. (26) And they were exceedingly

amazed, saying to one another, Who then can be saved? (27) And Jesus looked upon them, and said, To men this is impossible, but not to God, for to God all things are possible.

Luke xviii. (18) And a certain ruler asked him, saying, Good Teacher, what shall I do that I may inherit age-long life? (19) And Jesus said to him, Why callest thou me good? none is good save one: God. (20) Thou knowest the commandments: Do not commit adultery; do not kill; do not steal; do not bear false witness; Honour thy father and thy mother. (21) And he said, All these things have I observed from my youth. (22) And when Jesus heard these things, he said to him, One thing is still left for thee; sell all that thou hast, and give it away to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me. (23) And when he heard these things, he was very sorrowful, for he was very rich. (24) And Jesus, perceiving that he was very sorrowful, said, How hardly shall they who have riches enter into the kingdom of God! (25) For it is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. (26) And those who heard it said, Who then can be saved? (27) And he said, The things which are impossible to men are possible to God.

§ 236. The young man was drawn to Jesus by spiritual influence, to serve as a lesson and example to those around him. In this case, as in all others where it was convenient and opportune, Jesus had recourse to material images and expressions to produce a stronger effect upon the intelligence of the time, to extinguish selfishness, and attachment to worldly possessions, and to prepare for the advent of the Spirit, when the reign of the letter should have borne its fruits.

(Matth. xix. 16, 17; Mark x. 17, 18; Luke xviii. 18, 19.) —By saying, "None is good save one: God," Jesus condemned beforehand all idea of divinity, which he foresaw would be attributed to him by men. He made them understand (as should have been noticed sooner) that although he called himself the Son of God, and was called the Son of the Most High by the angel who was sent to Mary, yet he did not regard himself as God, who is the Father, and whom he afterwards proclaimed to be the only true God, the Uncreated Creator; and therefore, as he himself was only the Son of God, the pre-eminent quality of goodness did not belong to him who was so eminently good above and amidst all men. He thus made men understand that he is the Son of God Most High, in the sense of the words of the Prophet

(Psalm lxxxi. 1 and 6), which equally apply to every created spirit. He taught them that he could only be called God in the sense of this ancient prophet, who ranked him among the Gods, according to old Polytheistic ideas; but that he was always, like every created spirit, the Son of the Most High, who is the God of Gods, to quote the same Psalm.

The spirit does not obtain eternal life (which means the spiritual life, which is its normal and fluidic condition), until it has attained to moral perfection, and become a pure spirit. It is then free from all material influences, and is in direct communication with its Creator; and may then say, like Jesus, "I and my Father are one."

(Matth. xix. 17-21; Mark x. 19-21; Luke xviii. 20-22.)—Jesus quoted the commandments which men ought to obey. They were those which Moses delivered to the Hebrews, and may be summed up as follows:—Never do to others as you would not have them do to you; but observe the law of the Decalogue by abstaining from every evil action against your brothers, in thought, word, and deed, morally, materially, and intellectually. On the contrary, always do unto others as you would have them do unto you, and love your neighbour as you would wish him to love you, by practising justice, charity (both material and moral), devotion, and self-renunciation.

The sacrifice imposed on the young man was not meant to show that no one can reach God without laying aside all his worldly wealth; but simply that all attempts to fulfil the law are sterile, unless free from selfishness, and sanctified by charity. Charity and self-abnegation were deficient in this young man, and Jesus expressed it by saying, "Yet lackest thou one thing." In order to arrest the attention of the material men to whom he spoke, he concealed the spirit of the moral teaching under the letter of an absolute sacrifice of worldly wealth. The lesson which he intended to convey was to be explained to future generations when they had become able to bear it. He desired to show forcibly that where the treasure is, there also is the heart likewise.

(Matth. xix. 22-24; Mark x. 23-25; Luke xviii. 23-25.)—

Jesus read the thoughts of the young man, and perceived his sadness, and it was when he was about to go that he spoke to his disciples ; and the young man went away after hearing his words.

Jesus desired to impress the multitude strongly with the idea that there is no salvation without charity, and to prepare future generations, who should be enlightened by the spiritual revelation, to understand that wealth is one of the most formidable temptations to man, and an absolute barrier to all moral progress, unless he uses it as a means of love and charity towards his brethren. Wealth generally leads to selfishness, and to an attachment to worldly blessings. Man can only progress rapidly through charity, devotion, and self-renunciation. Justice is limited to what is just and unjust, or legal and illegal. He who is just in the human sense of justice is not always charitable ; but he who practises justice and mercy practises charity ; for mercy and charity are the same.

Charity is unlimited, and should always be prepared for any sacrifice which would be useful to others. Charity should never regard her own personality, but should extend out her helping hand to all who are in suffering and want, and should eagerly seek them out. Her incessant action should not be confined to men only, but to all animals, however insignificant. Charity is the Providence hidden in the heart of man, and diffusing her benefits over all nature. Do unto others as you would have them do unto you ; and then you will never do anything to others which you would not have done to yourself.

Devotion to others and self-renunciation result from true charity, which proceeds from the heart. We have stated this to give more emphasis to the explanation ; for men limit charity to giving alms of their abundance. You cannot be devoted to your brethren without self-renunciation ; for would not charity impose upon you any painful sacrifices to which you are impelled by devotion, in the sincerity of your hearts ? Devotion, self-renunciation, and charity are an inseparable trilogy.

It is likewise impossible that charity should not include disinterestedness. It ought not only to be exercised without thought of any reward whatever (for it could not then be called charity); but it ought not even to think of heavenly rewards; for even this would still be selfishness. Sweet charity ought to be practised for the sake of the good which it may produce; and conversions are wrought by the love of the neighbour, and not of one's self. He who gives to the poor, whether the poverty is material, moral, or intellectual, lends to God. But beware of expecting extravagant interest, for you would then lose your capital.

Charity should be devoted, disinterested, brave, and active. She should be gifted with all courage and virtue; she should go on the battle-fields, succour the wounded and dying amid the rain of bullets; and exhort them to repentance. She should hide herself in the cottages to rouse a spark which shall warm hearts and quicken souls; she should ascend the steps of thrones to speak the truth, and to tear away the bandage which pride and flattery bind over the eyes of crowned heads. She should raise up the poor who are in want of daily bread; and she should humble the pride of the powerful by her soft words. She should raise the courage of the weak and feeble; and her eyes should be always opened and turned on all sides to discover moral or physical sufferings, infirmities, and faults; and she should have a thousand hands always ready to succour others.

(Matth. xix. 25, 26; Mark x. 26, 27; Luke xviii. 26, 27.)—The disciples were greatly surprised at the Master's words, and especially at the material image which appeared to close the kingdom of God for ever against a rich man, even if he had kept the commandments. They could only perceive the difficulties to be surmounted, according to the literal meaning of the words, and did not comprehend the means by which these could be overcome. Who, then, can be saved? And if God alone can save, of what avail are works and faith? This question has been often asked. Look into your own hearts, Spiritists, and you will find

the answer. How can man purify himself sufficiently in one short life to save himself? Would his works be sufficiently good, or his faith sufficiently firm? Who, then, can save him, except God, that tender and indulgent Father, who gives him time, and forgives the debt of his wicked servant, until he shall be enabled to pay it? God grants him time; that powerful agent which helps man to reach the goal, however long and difficult the path. God alone is good, and God alone can save; for God only is indulgent and magnanimous; and he alone holds the duration of time in his hand.

Man himself cannot judge of the degree of purity, which it is needful for him to attain; and God alone can estimate it. The means granted to men to surmount all difficulties and attain the end are to be found in rebirth, and reincarnations, which are expiatory at first, and preceded by expiations which are proportioned and appropriated to the faults committed. At length they become glorious, when the spirit gains entrance to the kingdom of God (or the kingdom of the heavens), by attaining to moral perfection.

MATTHEW, CHAP. XIX.—VERSES 27-30. MARK,
CHAP. X.—VERSES 28-31. LUKE, CHAP. XVIII.
VERSES 28-30.

Promises to the Apostles.

Matth. xix. (27) Then Peter answered and said, Behold, we have left all things, and followed thee; what then shall we have? (28) And Jesus said to them, Verily, I say to you, that you who have followed me, in the regeneration, when the Son of Man shall sit on the throne of his glory, you also shall sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. (29) And every one who has left houses or brethren or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, on account of my name, shall receive a hundredfold, and shall gain age-lasting life. (30) But many that are first shall be last, and the last first.

Mark x. (28) And Peter began to say to him, Behold, we have left all things, and have followed thee. (29) And Jesus answered and said, Verily, I say to you, There is no one who has left house or brethren or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands on account of me and of the Gospel; (30) Who shall not receive a hundredfold now in this time; houses and brethren and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions; and age-lasting life in the age to come. (31) But many who are first shall be last, and the last first.

Luke xviii. (28) And Peter said, Behold, we have left all things, and have followed thee. (29) And he said to them, Verily, I say to you, that there is no one who has left house or parents or brethren or wife or children on account of the kingdom of God, (30) Who shall not receive manifold more in this time; and age-long life in the age to come.

§ 237. (Matth. xix. 27, 28.)—The Apostles who were already engaged in their mission were forewarned of their advancement. Having undertaken the work of the regeneration of humanity when they were incarnated at the time of the appearance of Christ on earth, they must continue to serve the Master until the moment when men shall have accomplished the end and object of their existence.

As ministers of the will of the Just One, they “judge” the tribes of Israel up to the present time, for they watch over the advancement of your planet, being intermediaries between Jesus and the spirits who surround you, just as Jesus is, as regards your planet, an intermediary between the Lord and themselves. They only communicate on exceptional occasions, to fulfil a spiritual mission.

The time of the regeneration is the period when the spiritual revelation unfolds before men the truths which they were previously only able to perceive under the cover of parable, and the veil of the letter. The time when the Son of Man shall sit on the throne of his glory is the period when all will feel the glory of the spiritual light, and bow before him who must be the only Shepherd of the flock which the Lord has entrusted to him.

The words addressed to the Apostles, “You also shall sit upon twelve thrones,” are allegorical expressions denoting the lofty elevation to which the ministers of Jesus will then have attained. “The twelve tribes of Israel” are an emblem of the divisions among nations which still exist on earth. The Jews were always thinking of their nationality, and could not fix their attention on anything not personally relating to themselves. Jesus appropriated his language to the period and the audience.

The expression “*judging* the twelve tribes of Israel” has not the same force as in modern languages. Jesus used the

word *judge* in different senses, according to the ideas or revelations which he desired to express under a veil. To *judge* means here to *govern*; and to give to every one according to his works and merits. The sense in which the Apostles judge the twelve tribes of Israel (or the nations entrusted to their guardianship) is that they watch over the accomplishment of their trials and expiations, and may therefore be regarded as *judges*, who impose on the guilty the penalties which the Law, personified in God, lays upon them. Expiation and remorse form the punishment, and the spirits who watch over these expiations fix their nature. Do not misunderstand us; we do not say that they fix the kind of trials which a spirit must suffer on returning to your earth. As a general rule, the spirit is free to choose them; but they carefully consider whether they are proportioned to the strength of the sinner, and to his chances of success. Their controlling action is exerted chiefly in the spiritual state. The remorse of the sinner is personified in the view of his faults; and the cruel phantoms which pursue him, and pierce him with the sharp arrows of bitter recollections, are the result of the will of the spirits who "judge the tribes of Israel." They proportion the punishment to the nature of the crime, and to the obduracy of the criminal; and the good, though less elevated, spirits around you watch over its execution. As we have already explained, they raise up living pictures before the eyes of the guilty, by means of the fluids and their combinations, so as to produce a complete illusion. Nothing takes place without an object; remorse leads to repentance, and repentance to the desire for reparation and progress.

We must now direct your attention to an important point in the words of Jesus respecting the twelve thrones. He addressed these words to Judas Iscariot, whom he knew would become the traitor, and who failed so grievously in his mission; as well as to the eleven faithful Apostles. These words imply that Judas Iscariot would be equal to the others in future ages, and that he would finally be regenerated by the means of moral and intellectual purification and progress

which were reserved for him, and which would be open to him as well as to all other guilty spirits, with time, expiation, and reincarnation, which include hell, purgatory, reparation, and progress. These words also proclaim beforehand the falsity of the monstrous and impious doctrine of the eternal punishment of guilty spirits, and of that eternal hell to which the Roman Church has condemned Judas Iscariot as the greatest of sinners.

We have only spoken of the twelve Apostles, because we confine ourselves to explaining the words of Jesus which were directly addressed to them; but we do not intend you to suppose that the twelve Apostles alone were chosen to fulfil these offices round the Master. There are more happy spirits who approach him that you could calculate, and all have their own mission and employment. They labour zealously at your progress, and they aid the advancement of spirits who have once arrived at the point of immaterial incarnation, and who must then progress in the fluidic worlds.

Matth. xix. 29; Mark x. 28, 29; Luke xviii. 28, 29.)—These words are also figurative. Unhappily men still obstinately persist in looking at the letter only; but they should understand them according to the Spirit. Jesus mentions these sacrifices as an example, as the greatest that man can make. All those who make any sacrifice whatever in obedience to the law of love to God, and devotion to their brethren will be rewarded; for their progress will be rapid. They will find a hundredfold, even in this world, for what they have abandoned. Those who tear themselves from domestic happiness to obey the law of Jesus, and to spread it among those who are ignorant of it, will find fathers, mothers, brothers, sisters, and friends; for they will meet with sympathetic and grateful hearts; not always, but often. Their family will be increased by all the scattered members whom they have assembled; the family of God, a vast family, in which every member feels the tenderness and devotion of the child for its father, mother, brothers, and sisters.

Man is still too selfish to understand this extension of love

which grows and increases in strength by dividing and spreading among a multitude. Do not imagine that the most intimate family affections are annihilated; on the contrary, you will find them more ardent and purer; but they will be less exclusive.

God is our Father; we are all his children, and we should all love each other with ardent affection, devote ourselves to each other, and eagerly sacrifice our own happiness for that of our brethren. Love is the sole law of regeneration; and love is the source whence arise all the virtues which should cause your existence to bring forth good fruits. Love is the source whence the soul has drawn its life from God; love is the eternal river on which the soul will float to lose itself in God. Love God above all things, and your brethren more than yourselves. Do not misunderstand our saying that you will lose yourselves in God. Does not love unite you to its object? Love is the pure feeling which rules over all, and which approaches nearest to the Divinity, who is all love. Thus the soul will lose itself in God, by approaching him nearer and nearer, but always preserving its own individuality and immortality in space and eternity.

(Matth. xix. 30; Mark x. 31.)—Love includes humility and charity; but if genuine, fruitful; and persevering on the path of progress, it desires the perfection both of itself and its brethren. Many who have started first will reach the goal last, from want of perseverance. Those who rely upon themselves, and think they can advance quicker, and surpass their brethren, will find themselves impeded by their pride, and proportionately retarded in their course. It has been thus in the past, it is so in the present, and will be so in the future.

MATTHEW, CHAP. XX.—VERSES 1-16.

Parable of the Labourers in the Vineyard.

- (1) For the kingdom of the heavens is like unto a man, a householder, who went out early in the morning to hire labourers for his vineyard. (2) And having agreed with the labourers for a denarius a day, he sent them into his vineyard. (3) And going out about the third hour,

he saw others standing idle in the market place, (4) And said to them, Go ye also into the vineyard, and I will give you what is fair. And they went. (5) Again he went out about the sixth and ninth hour, and did the same. (6) And about the eleventh hour, he went out and found others standing idle, and says to them, Why stand ye here idle for the whole day? (7) They say to him, Because no one has hired us. He says to them, Go ye also into the vineyard, and you shall receive whatever is fair. (8) And when it was evening, the master of the vineyard says to his steward, Call the labourers, and give them their hire, beginning from the last to the first. (9) And they who came about the eleventh hour, received each a denarius. (10) And when the first came, they thought they would have received more, and they also received each a denarius. (11) And when they had received it, they murmured against the householder, saying, (12) These last have only worked for an hour, and you have made them equal to us, who have borne the burden and scorching heat of the day. (13) And he answered one of them, and said, Comrade, I do thee no injustice; didst thou not agree with me for a denarius? (14) Take what is yours, and go away; and I will give to this last even as to you. Is it not right for me to do what I will with my own? (15) Is thine eye evil because I am good? (16) Thus the last shall be first, and the first last, for many are called, but few are chosen.

§ 238. This parable must be explained from two distinct points of view; firstly, that of the Jews and Christians who were to live under the reign of the letter, until the New Revelation; and, secondly, from the spiritual stand-point of the present Revelation, which enables you to understand the thought of Jesus which was hidden under the letter. From a literal point of view, Jesus draws a parallel between the Jews, who were called to the knowledge of God from the earliest ages, and the Gentiles, who should be called to this knowledge through his mission. At this period, when the pride of the chief men among the Jews set up a barrier between themselves, and all who were not subject to the law of Moses, it was needful to hold out great and encouraging hopes to repentant sinners, and to humble the presumption of those who believed that they alone were entitled to the favours of the Lord, because they were born Hebrews rather than Gentiles; and it was needful to make a strong impression on their minds that they might be able to remember it. It was with this object that Jesus spoke the words recorded in v. 16. The time had not yet come for him to explain the difference between the working hours of the labourers, and the equality of their hire, by reincar-

nation. This shows that the labourers who had been called first remained stationary in several existences, while those who were called at the eleventh hour, and worked at their advancement with zeal and activity, will find themselves equal as regards the work done, when they are called to receive their reward at the end of the day. The sum of their progress will be equal, and they will consequently be entitled to the same reward.

You should specially notice that Jesus purposely leaves the amount of work done by each of the labourers out of consideration, leaving it to the promised spiritual revelation to explain his thought according to the Spirit. Does Jesus say that the labourers who began their work in the morning were industrious? Does he say that they were either exhausted by the heat, or fatigued by the length of the day; that they had lost no time, and had advanced the work of the Lord more than those who were called at the eleventh hour? Does he say that they had done more than the latter, who felt that they had lost time, and hastened to finish their task that they might be able to say to the Master, "Lord, I have done all thy will?" No, the labourers who had been called first, and who received only a denarius each, like those of the eleventh hour, and therefore murmured against the householder, did not say that they had advanced the work more than the others; they confined themselves to saying that they had been in the vineyard, and borne the burden and heat of the day, whereas the others had only worked for one hour. You must also interpret the words of the householder (verses 13-15) in accordance with justice, for you should always seek for justice in the works of God, and in the words of Jesus. His words were intended to prevent the rise of envy among men, and to encourage those who had but lately come to the knowledge of Gospel truths, and might have feared that they would have no right to the reward promised to those who had received this knowledge earlier.

When the parable is freed from the veil of the letter, the idea relates to the work of spirits from the moment of their

spiritual creation ; when they have been invested with free will, and have failed, and have therefore been forced to incarnate themselves upon your earth, and to progress by successive reincarnations. Some have worked at their advancement for centuries, and have suffered many incarnations, but have worked lazily, and have allowed themselves to drift with the course of events, while others, though belonging to a later creation, have entered eagerly upon the path of progress ; and both have arrived at the goal at the same time. Their work has been equal in value, and they are therefore entitled to the same reward. You may observe that the labourers who were called at the eleventh hour had not refused to work ; they were waiting for it, and as soon as they heard the call, they rose up joyfully to accomplish their task.

You should understand that the different hours at which the master hired the labourers, and the end of the day when all were entitled to an equal reward, are divisions suited to the intelligence of the listeners. There are no divisions of time in eternity ; but these allusions relate to classes of spirits who commence their work at different periods, and to the time when those who belong to creations posterior to each other, meet at the same point of progress, and are consequently all entitled to the same reward. The oldest in the order of creation have undergone a greater number of incarnations than the others, because they have either remained stationary, or have worked at their advancement less diligently than those who have entered on their course later, but have arrived at the same goal at the same time, on account of their zealous and sustained advance in the path of progress.

Labourers of the eleventh hour, do not fear to approach the Great Father, nor to undertake the task which he has given you to do, for he does not regard the length of time which you have taken to accomplish it, but the zeal and cheerfulness with which it has been executed. But you who have stood in the market-place till the eleventh hour must not expect to receive the reward if you refuse to answer

the call. You must not say, whenever the Father calls his willing labourers, "We will come later, for we are not yet inclined ; the day is long ; the sun is scorching, and rest is sweet ; let us wait to begin our task till the cool of the evening." Beware of this, for the coolness of the evening will bring with it the darkness which will cover you, and you will find it too late to begin, and will be obliged to wait till the dawn of another day shall find you standing in the market-place, waiting for work.

Industrious labourers who have begun your task at day-break, rejoice in the goodness of the Lord, for his generosity extends to those who were not able to do better, but were willing labourers, as well as to yourselves. Do not regard his bounties to your brethren with an evil eye ; for what injury does his goodness do to you ? And does not the father of a family who divides his goods among his children give an equal share to all ? Does not the last receive as much as the first ? You should never envy the lot of your brethren, for you do not know the causes which have produced these effects ; and you do not know whether he who has been called to the vineyard last would not have worked harder than you if he had heard the Master's voice at dawn. Let each of you accomplish his own task, and aid your brethren to fulfil theirs, if you have the means, and bless the Father of the family who looks rather at the intention than at the work ; for nearly all your work is bad.

You should now understand the object and meaning of v. 16. From a literal point of view, these words were not designed to divide the labourers into two classes, the elect and the reprobate, for all the labourers, whether first or last, were entitled to receive the same reward from the Father of the family, on the sole condition of having deserved it at the end of the day ; and with the difference only that the last have earned it in less time than the first, because they have advanced the master's work equally in a shorter time. Therefore all who are called ought to be chosen ; but although many are called, few are chosen, because

many delay, or lose their time, and do not fulfil their task. There are only a few who work with zeal and activity at the work which the Master has given them to do ; and therefore the first will be last and the last will be first ; and many are called, but few are chosen.

According to the Spirit, these words refer generally to the secret motives which guide the actions of men, and render them acceptable in the sight of the Lord through love, humility, and disinterestedness. Whoever exalts himself shall be humbled, and whoever humbles himself shall be exalted. The first who were called to the knowledge of the true faith, which is the law preached to men by Jesus, will arrive last at the goal, if they wander into bypaths, instead of following the straight course ; for then their way will be long and difficult, and will bring them back to their starting-point, while those who started last, but have always advanced straight and perseveringly towards the goal, will arrive there sooner. Those spirits who have started on the path of progress, and have either remained stationary, or advanced slowly and idly along the path of incarnations and experiences (and this is the case with most), although, perhaps, the first called in the order of Creation will be the last chosen, for they will be the last to attain to moral perfection, whereas the spirits who have always advanced with zeal and activity (who are the minority) will be the first chosen, though they may be the last in the order of Creation, and thus the last called to enter on the path of progress.

§ 239. This parable has been condemned as apocryphal, for it has been said, "It is not justice which regulates the reward due to each, but simply the good pleasure of the Master. This time, it is true, the Master is pleased to give the same reward to the first labourers, and to the last ; but according to his principle, 'Is it not right for me to do what I will with my own?' he might just as well have given ten or a hundred times as much to the last as to the first ; and it has therefore been said that it is even lawful to govern a society of slaves on the same principle."

It is foolish never to look beyond the letter, or to seek for the Spirit only to interpret it according to your own ideas. Always seek for justice in the works of God, and in the

words of Jesus ; and if you would interpret them, let it not be according to your own interests and preconceptions, but with the full approval of your conscience. The answer to this criticism is included in the explanation which we have just given you of the end and object of the parable. Let these critics consider the language and motives of Jesus in reference both to the present and the future, and seek for the thought of the Master, veiled by the letter, and covered by the parable, from the point of view of the spiritual Creation, and the course of the spirit on the path of progress by successive incarnations ; and they will then see that there is neither favour, nor caprice, but simply justice. We may point out to you that a spirit whose first incarnation on your earth was a thousand years ago, may not have arrived, in your age, beyond the stage of the inhabitants of Australia, whereas another who assumed his material envelope only three hundred years ago, may have already arrived at the stage of a Laplander. Do you not think that the latter has deserved better than he who preceded him in the course of incarnations on your planet ? Even supposing that, instead of advancing so rapidly, he had only advanced to the Australian's level, they would both have arrived at the same incarnation ; but instead of questioning the justice of the Master as regards the equality of the reward, would you not say that the second had deserved better ? But supposing that the first had reached a grade higher by mere lapse of time, while the second was only a grade lower, would it not be just that they should receive the same reward, if the second had worked relatively as hard as the first ?

MATTHEW, CHAP. XX.—VERSES 17-19. MARK,
CHAP. X.—VERSES 32-34. LUKE, CHAP. XVIII.
VERSES 31-34.

Jesus foretells his Crucifixion.

Matth. xx. (17) And as Jesus was going up to Jerusalem, he took the twelve disciples apart on the way, and said to them, (18) Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man shall be betrayed to the

chief priests and scribes. (19) And they shall condemn him to death, and they shall deliver him up to the Gentiles to be mocked and scourged and crucified, and on the third day he shall rise again.

Mark x. (32) And they were on the road going up to Jerusalem, and Jesus was advancing before them, and they were amazed, and they feared as they followed him, And taking the twelve aside, he began to speak to them again about the things which were going to happen to him. (33) Behold, we are going to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man shall be betrayed to the chief priests and scribes, and they shall condemn him to death, and shall deliver him over to the Gentiles. (34) And they shall mock him and scourge him and spit upon him, and shall put him to death; and on the third day he shall rise again.

Luke xviii. (31) And he took the twelve, and said to them, Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and all things which were written through the prophets shall be accomplished to the Son of Man. (32) For he shall be delivered to the Gentiles, and shall be mocked and insulted and spit upon. (33) And they shall scourge him, and put him to death, and he shall rise again on the third day. (34) And they understood nothing of these things, and this saying was hid from them, and they did not understand what was said.

§ 240. Jesus now repeats the prophecy which he had already spoken (Matth. xvi. 21; xvii. 20-22; Mark viii. 31; ix. 30; Luke ix. 22, 44, 45) concerning his death and resurrection, with the addition of new and more precise details. These words need no explanation; they are positive. Jesus foretold all these events before they came to pass, and thus gave a greater emphasis to all his sayings, and a much greater confidence in his mission, when events had justified his words. The narratives of the Evangelists complete each other, and the variations between them are the sum-total of the prophecy of Jesus, of which each recorded a part. The disciples could not understand the exact meaning of the Master's words any more than before. The idea of his resurrection was incomprehensible to them, and they were purposely left in obscurity about it, that the coming events might take their course without interruption. You are told that the Apostles were all amazed and terrified, as they followed Jesus on the way to Jerusalem, because they feared the priests and the chief men among the Jews, whom they felt that it would be most difficult to escape from.

MATTHEW, CHAP. XX.—VERSES 20-28. MARK,
CHAP. X.—VERSES 35-45.

The Sons of Zebedee.

Matth. xx. (20) Then the mother of the sons of Zebedee came to him with her sons, doing obeisance to him, and asking something of him. (21) And he said to her, What wilt thou? She saith to him, Promise that these my two sons may sit, one on thy right hand, and one on thy left, in thy kingdom. (22) And Jesus answered and said, Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of the cup that I am about to drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? They say to him, We are able. (23) And he saith to them, Ye shall indeed drink of my cup, and be baptized with the baptism with which I shall be baptized; but to sit on my right hand and on my left is not mine to give, but is for those for whom it has been reserved by my Father. (24) And when the ten heard it, they were indignant with the two brothers. (25) But Jesus called them, and said, You know that the rulers of the nations lord it over them, and the great exercise authority over them. (26) But it shall not be thus among you; but whoever shall desire to be great among you, let him be your attendant. (27) And whoever would be first among you, let him be your servant. (28) Even as the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.

Mark x. (35) And James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came to him, saying, Teacher, we desire that thou shouldst do for us what we ask. (36) And he said to them, What do you wish me to do for you? (37) And they said to him, Grant that we may sit one on thy right hand, and the other on thy left, in thy glory. (38) And Jesus said to them, You know not what you ask. Are you able to drink of the cup which I drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? (39) And they said to him, We are able. And Jesus said to them, You shall indeed drink of the cup which I drink of, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with; (40) But to sit on my right hand and on my left is not mine to give, but is for those for whom it has been reserved. (41) And the ten heard it, and began to be indignant about James and John. (42) But Jesus called them and said to them, You know that those who are chosen to rule over the nations lord it over them, and their great men exercise authority over them. (43) But it shall not be thus with you, but if any one will be great among you, let him be your minister. (44) And whoever desires to be first, shall be servant of all. (45) For even the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.

§ 241 (Matth. xx. 20, 21; Mark x. 35-37).—The difference between the two narratives is unimportant. The mother of James and John was with them, like many others, who accompanied their sons and brothers, and followed Jesus. The mother and her two sons spoke to Jesus successively; but his reply was addressed to the two brothers. Thus the two narratives explain and complete

each other. Among the ancients, the right was the place of honour, as it is still, though to a less extent, among yourselves; and although the left implied some inferiority, it was nevertheless likewise a place of honour as compared with the other guests. James and John made this request that they might be first to secure celestial honours, according to their worldly notions, and rank immediately after Jesus, whom they supposed would be the host at the celestial feast, where they would all be guests. The words need not be taken literally, but as an image of the rank to which they aspired.

(Matth. xx. 22, 23; Mark x. 38-40.)—Jesus alluded to the sacrifice which was about to take place, and not to the water with which John had baptized him. He subsequently alluded in general terms to the martyrdom which was suffered by most of the Apostles, in accordance with their Master's example. He afterwards asserts the divine supremacy over every spirit, however elevated; and reminds men that God alone knows when the spirit is sufficiently pure to sit on the "right" or the "left" of the Master; and that God is one, and almighty, and alone possesses sovereignty as the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, to admit or to reject, until the purification is complete. "You know not what you ask," said Jesus to James and John. In fact, they were incapable in their incarnate state, and during their earthly mission, of perceiving the meaning of their request, or of the answers which they received, which related to the immutable laws which God has established from all eternity for the progress of the spirit, and its ascending course to perfection.

(Matth. xx. 24-28; Mark x. 41-45.)—After the indignation which the ten other Apostles felt towards James and John, Jesus gave them a short and simple lesson, urging on men humility, disinterestedness, self-renunciation, and devotion towards all. You can all understand this. This lesson bore fruit among the disciples and the first Christians. But men have lost sight of it, and wandered from its practice, ever since the Church of Christ became, subsequently to apostolic times, a kingdom of this world, sometimes taking part with the powers of this world, and sometimes struggling

against them. Thus the Church has been led into pride, ambition, domination, and intolerance, and into abuses and excesses which have resulted from these errors and passions.

The time has come when the Master's words must be fulfilled, and become a practical truth, and when he who would be the greatest among you will always be ready to serve his brethren, and will be the servant of all. Spiritists, who are the first pioneers of the era of regeneration, set your brethren an example of humility, disinterestedness, self-renunciation, and devotion towards all. Gather together the scattered materials, and prepare for the reconstruction of the Church of Christ on the immovable and indestructible foundations of liberty, equality, and fraternity, by practising justice, love, and reciprocal and fraternal charity. Jesus himself laid these foundations when he proclaimed among you that all the Law and the Prophets are contained in the love of God, your Creator ; and of your neighbour as yourselves. The practice of this double commandment consists in the observance of the laws of justice, love, and charity, which includes the observance of the laws of work and progress for the perfection of yourselves and of your brethren.

Prepare for the reconstruction of this Church of Christ ; for your planet should be his temple, and all men should be his faithful followers, apart from all the different external forms of religion which now divide them. Men, our dearly-loved brothers, prepare yourselves all to become the disciples of Jesus by endeavouring to walk in his steps, and by understanding and practising his lessons and examples in spirit and in truth. We repeat in the name of the Master, "Let him who will be the greatest among you be the servant of all," even as the Son of Man came to regenerate you, by showing you all the paths of moral perfection through humility, disinterestedness, self-abnegation, and absolute devotion, extending to the sacrifice of life itself for one's brethren.

Jesus said, "The Son of Man came to give his life a ransom for many," and not for all, because at the time of

the purification of your planet, some rebellious and obstinately guilty spirits will be removed from your earth, and cast down upon other inferior planets, where they will be obliged to expiate their offences, and to progress under the guidance of another Christ of God. We hope that those who are thus rejected will be few in number ; for the path of progress is open to all. You have all your free-will and the law of love to guide you safely and surely in the right path. Jesus never established two classes of the "elect" and the reprobate. You may realize the full grandeur of the Master's words ; all will not attain the goal under the same leadership ; but all will reach it at last.

LUKE, CHAP. XIX.—VERSES 1-10.

Conversion of Zacchæus.

(1) And he entered Jericho, and passed through. (2) And behold there was a man named Zacchæus, a chief among the tax-gatherers, and he was rich. (3) And he sought to see who Jesus was, and could not for the crowd, because he was small in stature. (4) And he ran on before, and climbed up into a sycamore tree, that he might see him, because he was about to pass that way. (5) And as he came to the place, Jesus looked up and saw him, and said to him, Zacchæus, make haste and come down, for I must remain at thy house to-day. (6) And he hastened to come down, and showed him the way rejoicing. (7) And all who saw it murmured, saying, that he was gone to lodge with a sinful man. (8) And Zacchæus stood up, and said to the Lord, Behold, the half of my goods, Lord, I give to the poor, and if I have taken anything from any man by false accusation, I restore him four-fold. (9) And Jesus said to him, To-day is salvation come to this house, since he also is a son of Abraham. (10) For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.

§ 242. The meaning of this incident is obvious. Jesus came to aid those who were lost. His persuasive morality bore fruit in some hearts, and they who sought to put his principles in practice were saved ; for they entered on the path of rapid and continuous progress. The morality of Jesus is always pure and comforting, and is still before your eyes. You have heard it preached, but unfortunately most of you do not try to apply it to yourselves. Is this the fault of those who hear, or of those who speak ? O, endeavour to imitate Zacchæus, and hasten to prepare your

abode to receive the Lord ! Prepare to purify your earth by purifying yourselves ; listen to the words of Jesus, and apply them to yourselves ; hasten to repair the injury which you have done to your brethren in word and deed ; and return seriously to your better selves, and you also, like Zacchæus, may hear the Master's words sounding sweetly in the depths of your hearts. You will then become a child of Abraham, like Zacchæus. The Jews interpreted those words to imply an heir of heaven ; and therefore he who enters on the good path is from this point of view a child of Abraham. Jesus repeats (v. 10) the words which we have already explained (vol. ii. p. 181).

MATTHEW, CHAP. XX.—VERSES 29–34. MARK,
CHAP. X.—VERSES 46–52. LUKE, CHAP. XVIII.
VERSES 35–43.

The Blind Men of Jericho Healed.

Matth. xx. (29) And as they were going forth from Jericho, a large crowd followed him. (30) And behold two blind men were sitting by the road, and hearing that Jesus passeth by, they cried out, saying, Have compassion on us, O Lord, son of David. (31) And the crowd rebuked them, that they should be silent, but they cried out louder, saying, Have pity on us, Lord, son of David. (32) And Jesus stood still, and spoke to them, and said, What do you wish me to do for you ? (33) They say to him, Lord, that our eyes may be opened. (34) And Jesus had compassion on them, and touched their eyes, and immediately their eyes were opened, and they followed him.

Mark x. (46) And they came out of Jericho, and as he was going forth from Jericho with his disciples and a considerable crowd, Bartimæus, the blind son of Timæus, sat by the road, begging. (47) And hearing that it was Jesus the Nazarene, he began to cry out, and to say, Jesus, son of David, have pity on me. (48) And many rebuked him, that he should be silent, but he cried out much more, O son of David, have pity on me. (49) And Jesus stood still, and said that he should be called. And they call the blind man, saying to him, Take courage, rise up, he calleth thee. (50) And he, casting away his cloak, stood up, and came to Jesus. (51) And Jesus answered and said to him, What wilt thou that I should do for thee ? And the blind man said to him, Rabboni, that I may receive my sight. (52) And Jesus said to him, Depart ; thy faith hath saved thee. And immediately he received his sight, and followed Jesus on the way.

Luke xviii. (35) And it came to pass that as he was drawing nigh to Jericho, a certain blind man sat near the road begging. (36) And hearing the crowd going along, he asked what it might be. (37) And they told him, Jesus the Nazarene is passing by. (38) And he cried

out, saying, Jesus, son of David, have pity on me. (39) And those who were in front reproved him, that he should be silent ; but he cried out much more, saying, Son of David, have pity on me. (40) And Jesus stood still, and commanded that he should be brought to him. (41) And when he drew nigh, he asked him, saying, What wilt thou that I shall do for thee ? And he said, Lord, that I may receive my sight. (42) And Jesus said to him, Receive thy sight ; thy faith hath saved thee. (43) And immediately he received his sight, and followed him, praising God ; and all the people who saw it gave praise to God.

§ 243. Two separate cases of healing are here related ; one by Mark and Luke, and the other by Matthew. Jesus did not remain the whole time in the town, after entering it, and claiming the hospitality of Zacchæus ; but he went out several times to instruct the people ; and it was on these occasions that Jesus performed the cures by the sole action of his will, and by his magnetic power. He had no need to touch the eyes of the blind men ; but he did so to show his disciples how to act in similar cases.

When Jesus cured the other blind man, Bartimæus, the son of Timæus, by merely saying, "Depart, thy faith hath saved thee ;" he desired to make a strong impression on the multitude by exhibiting his power to men, and showing them how much sincere and ardent faith may hope for from the protection and mercies of the Lord. O men, blind of heart and intellect, have faith, and exclaim, "Lord, let our eyes be opened ;" and you will recover your moral and spiritual sight ; say with faith, "Master, make me to see," and you shall see ; for the spiritual light shall enlighten the darkness around you, and cast its radiance on the straight and certain road which lies before you.

MATTHEW, CHAP. XXI.—VERSES 1-17. MARK,

CHAP. XI.—VERSES 1-11, 15-19. LUKE,

CHAP. XIX.—VERSES 28-48.

*Entry of Jesus into Jerusalem—The Temple Cleansed—
Prophecy of the Destruction of Jerusalem.*

Matth. xxi. (1) And when they drew nigh to Jerusalem, and came to Bethphage, to the Mount of Olives, then Jesus sent two disciples, (2) Saying to them, Go into the village opposite us, and immediately you will find an ass bound, and a foal with her ; loose them and bring them to me. (3) And if any one shall ask you anything, say, The Lord hath need of them ; and immediately he will send them. (4) And all this

was done that the word through the prophet might be fulfilled, saying, (5) Tell the daughter of Sion, Behold, thy King cometh to thee, mild and mounted upon an ass, and a foal, the offspring of a beast of burden. (6) And the disciples went and did as Jesus had commanded them. (7) They led the ass and the foal, and they laid their garments upon them, and he sat upon them. (8) And the great multitude spread their garments in the way, and others cut young branches from the trees, and scattered them on the road. (9) And the multitudes going before and behind cried out, saying, Hosanna to the Son of David; blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest. (10) And when he came into Jerusalem, all the city was disturbed, saying, Who is this? (11) And the multitudes said, This is Jesus, the Prophet from Nazareth in Galilee. (12) And Jesus came into the Temple of God, and cast out all those who sold and bought in the Temple, and overthrew the tables of the money-changers, and the seats of those who sold doves. (13) And saith to them, It is written, My house shall be called a house of prayer; but you have made it a robber's cave. (14) And the blind and lame came to him in the Temple, and he healed them. (15) And the chief priests and scribes seeing the wonders which he performed, and the children shouting in the Temple, and saying, Hosanna to the Son of David, were angry, and said to him, (16) Hearest thou what these say? And Jesus saith to them, Yea; hast thou never read, Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise? (17) And he left them behind, and came out of the city to Bethany, and lodged there.

Mark xi. (1) And when they drew near to Jerusalem, to Bethphage and Bethany at the Mount of Olives, he sends two of his disciples, (2) And says to them, Go into the village opposite us, and just as you are entering it, you will find a foal bound, upon which no man has sat; loose him and bring him. (3) And if any one shall say to you, Why do you do this? you shall say, The Lord hath need of him; and immediately he will send him here. (4) And they went and found the foal tied at the door, outside in the street, and they loose him. (5) And some of those standing by said to them, What do ye, loosing the foal? (6) And they said to them as Jesus had commanded; and they let them go. (7) And they led the foal to Jesus, and laid their garments on it, and seated him on it. (8) And many spread their garments in the way, and others cut branches from the trees, and scattered them in the road. (9) And those going before and following after, cried out, saying, Hosanna; Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord. (10) Blessed is the kingdom coming in the name of the Lord, of our father David, Hosanna in the highest. (11) And Jesus entered into Jerusalem, and into the Temple, and having looked round on all things, and evening being already come, he came out to Bethany with the twelve. (12) And they come to Jerusalem, and Jesus coming into the Temple began to cast out those who sold and bought in the Temple, and he overthrew the tables of the money-changers, and the seats of those who sold doves. (13) And would not permit that any one should carry any utensil through the Temple. (14) And he taught, saying to them, Is it not written, My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations? but you have made it a robber's cave. (15) And the Scribes and Pharisees heard it, and sought how they might destroy him, for they feared him, because all the multitude was astonished at his teaching. (16) And when it was late, he went out of the city.

Luke xix. (28) And saying these things, he departed thence, going up to Jerusalem. (29) And it came to pass that when they drew near to Bethphage and Bethany, and to the hill called the Mount of Olives, he sent two of his disciples, saying, (30) Go into the village opposite, and as you are entering, you will find a foal bound, upon which no man has ever sat; loose him, and bring him. (31) And if any one should ask you saying, Why do ye loose him? you shall say thus, The Lord has need of him. (32) And the messengers went and found it as he had said to them. (33) And while they were loosing the foal, his masters said to them, Why do you loose the foal? (34) And they said, The Lord has need of him. (35) And they led him to Jesus, and casting their garments on the foal, they mounted Jesus thereon. (36) And as he was going, they strewed their garments on the road. (37) And as they were drawing near to the descent of the Mount of Olives, all the multitude of the disciples began to rejoice, and to praise God with a loud voice on account of all the great works which they had seen, saying, (38) Blessed is the King who cometh in the name of the Lord. Peace in heaven, and glory in the highest. (39) And certain of the Pharisees among the crowd said to him, Teacher, rebuke your disciples. (40) And he answered and said unto them, I tell you that if these should be silent, the stones would cry out. (41) And as they drew near, seeing the city, he lamented over it, saying, (42) If thou also hadst known, and in this thy day, the things which are for thy peace; but now they are hid from thine eyes. (43) For the days shall come upon thee that thy enemies shall cast a rampart round thee, and encompass and distress thee on every side; (44) And shall raze thee to the ground, and thy children in thee, and shall not leave in thee stone upon stone; because thou knewest not the time of thy punishment. (45) And coming into the Temple, he began to cast out those who bought and sold therein, (46) Saying to them, It is written, My house is the house of prayer; but you have made it a robber's cave. (47) And he was teaching daily in the Temple. And the chief priests and scribes, and the leading people sought to destroy him. (48) And could not find how they should do it, for all the people crowded round him to hear him.

§ 244. The general lesson here is that of the humility of Jesus. His entry was made triumphant by the enthusiasm awakened by his virtues, but it was not accompanied by any pomp or luxury. It was as simple and modest as the morality which he preached, and taught by his own example.

Do not trouble yourselves about the discrepancies between the narratives relating to the manner in which Jesus was mounted; for they do not affect any important facts. The ass was chosen, because it was the poor man's steed; and a young animal which had never been mounted was chosen to show that the most intractable could easily be brought beneath the Master's yoke.

Jesus drove the traders from the Temple. O Jesus, what

hast thou to do in places where everything is trafficked in ; where gold dazzles the eyes, buys prayer and pardon, redeems crime, and makes a vile merchandise of the blessings of the Lord !

Jesus said, "It is written, My house shall be called a house of prayer, but you have made it a robber's cave." These words signify, "Despise those who sell pardon and mercies, and impose upon credulity and ignorance ; for they steal when they sell to others what they do not even possess themselves."

All the disciples who were preceding or following Jesus in the crowd, cried "Hosanna !" O let your voices rise towards the Lord, and they will stifle the repinings of earth ! Hosanna to him who brings peace to the weak and lowly, and humbles the pride of the proud and arrogant !

(Matth. xxi. 1-7 ; Mark xi. 1-7 ; Luke xix. 28-35.)—We have often told you that the Gospel narratives complete each other. The she-ass was with the foal, which followed its mother. Jesus mounted the foal, but although he needed the foal only, he told his disciples to bring them both ; for the traditions and prophecies were to be connected with the events of the Messianic era. Mark and Luke spoke only of the ass which served for the steed of the King who made his entry into Jerusalem. As regards the foreknowledge of Jesus of what would pass between his disciples and the owners, you must remember his origin and superior mission ; and that everything was prepared beforehand by incarnations for his requirements. His prevision was due to the same cause as his knowledge of the hearts of men ; he was always a spirit, under the human appearance which he had assumed for the purposes of his mission. Prevision can only take place with you under the medianimic influence of your guides, so long as you suffer material incarnation as it exists at present among your humanity ; and this will be the case until matter becomes so subtle that the spirit can free itself from its bonds. The owners of the asses allowed them to be taken away. They were influenced by their guides, and yielded to their unconscious inspiration, without knowing

exactly why. Jesus knew beforehand that everything would happen thus. He knew the spirits who were incarnated to aid in the fulfilment of his mission; their degree of advancement, and their obedience to the inspirations of their guides.

(Matth. xxi. 4, 5;* Isaiah lxii. 1, 2, 11; Zachariah ix. 9.)—The words of the Evangelist and the Prophets were only to be explained in spirit and in truth by the New Revelation. Under the veil of the letter, they contain an allusion to the spiritual position of Jesus. Your King has come among you, for God has appointed him the ruler of your planet, and the director of its progress, and of that of your humanity.

(Matth. xxi. 8, 9; Mark xi. 8, 9; Luke xix. 36–38.)—The crowd around Jesus chose words of praise and allegiance which were awakened in their minds by the influence of the spirits of the Lord.

(Luke xix. 39, 40.)—This manifestation must have taken place; and if men had exerted their free-will to oppose it, the spirits who surrounded the Master would have caused voices to be heard singing the praises of him who was the Son of David, in the eyes of men.

(Luke xix. 41–44.)—The words of Jesus concerning the fate which awaited Jerusalem were prophetic, for they were in accordance with events to come. Jesus alluded to these events to impress the minds of men when the events themselves should be fulfilled. These words were also allegorical, in a spiritual point of view, relative to the children of Jerusalem, and as indicating, under a veil, the fate reserved for spirits who rebel against the voice of the Saviour. You know that the guilty man who has failed in his experiences must expiate his offences; and the faults of one incarnation often react upon many succeeding ones. This is why Jerusalem would have to weep over her obduracy; for the rebellious spirits who were her sons would be forced to expiate their crimes and wilful blindness.

* Compare also John xii. 14, 15.

(Matth. xxi. 10, 11.)—"When Jesus entered Jerusalem, all the city was agitated." Yes; and the surprise was great to see one so humble surrounded by so vast a multitude. His fame had preceded him; but they expected to see a learned man, with pomp and surroundings corresponding to his knowledge. Every one asked, "Who, then, is this?" They had long ago forgotten the young child who had taught the learned men in the Temple. Those who accompanied him, said, "This is Jesus the Prophet from Nazareth in Galilee." It is certain that Jesus never called himself God; and although his disciples were led to attribute divinity to Christ after the completion of his earthly mission, yet this was due to their interpreting his words "the Son of God," "My Father in the heavens," &c., literally; and to the miracles which he performed, and especially to his resurrection and subsequent appearances. They could not suppose that any being but an incarnate God could possibly perform all these miracles; and they interpreted his words literally, for it was necessary that it should be thus to attract the masses. The idols could not be destroyed without a visible and palpable God to replace them; a purely spiritual Deism would have been insufficient, and it was necessary to act according to the age, and the conditions and necessities of human progress.

When the needs of the age had changed, voices were raised to dispute the doctrine of the Trinity, which endeavoured to retain unity in plurality, and to uphold monotheism. But it only escaped polytheism by taking a pantheistic character. Others disputed the sacrifice of God, who sacrificed himself to himself to satisfy his own vengeance, and to redeem men whom he could either pardon, or redeem by his own free will. Do not find fault with this. Everything has its purpose in the course of time and human progress, according to the knowledge and wisdom of God; and every day has its own needs, and its own work.

Previous to the New Revelation which we bring you, men were incapable of receiving it. But we now free the

spirit from the letter, and explain in spirit and in truth, who Jesus Christ is.*

(Matth. xxi. 12-16; Mark xi. 11, 15-18; Luke xii. 45-48.)—All traffic in the kingdom of God is impious. Look back to Hebrew times. The Jews redeemed their faults by sacrifices, and the merchants first provided them with victims, and with vases containing perfumes, which were brought into the Temple, and sold there. Then the business became more extensive, and commercial transactions began in the House of God; and your Stock Exchanges, with their dishonest transactions, found a prototype in the Temple of Israel. We repeat with Jesus "It is written, My house shall be called a house of prayer but you have made it a robber's cave." The Spirit of Truth is about to fulfil these words of the Master by replacing the letter which killeth by the Spirit which giveth life.

The time is coming (and it has already come to all men who understand and practise the law of love, independently of all external rites and ceremonies) when men shall no longer worship the Father on the mountain, or in Jerusalem, but shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth; and your earth will then be called a house of prayer for all nations. The spirits of the Lord, the messengers of the Spirit of Truth, are incarnate or errant spirits, who come to raise the veil which hides the truth from men, that what was secret may be known, and that what was hidden may be revealed. They work with the skill and prudence of the oculist who prepares a man to see the light, by operating on a cataract. They come to lead men to practise humility, disinterestedness, love, charity, self-renunciation, indulgence, pardon and forgetfulness of injuries and insults, and reciprocal devotion between and towards all. Thus they will lead men to the true fraternity which alone can and will create equality and liberty among all by sincere reciprocity and union, and will thus accomplish the regeneration of man, which the Master has predicted and promised. When this fraternal

* On the divinity attributed to Christ by men, compare the explanation subsequently given on John i. 1, 2.

unity shall be completed, the kingdom of God will be established. Then will your purified planet become the New Jerusalem, and Jesus will appear in all his spiritual glory as the visible sovereign of his equally purified creatures; Jesus, your Protector and Ruler, your Master and your King. Then, too, a great cry will arise from the regenerate men who have truly become brethren, who will raise together with one voice the hymn once sung by the crowd which accompanied Jesus on his entry into Jerusalem, "Blessed is he who cometh in the name of the Lord; peace in heaven, and glory in the highest heavens." And the spirits who shall have prepared and accomplished the regeneration and purification of your planet and its humanity, will sing the song of the angels who led the shepherds to the stable at Bethlehem, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace; good-will towards men."

MATTHEW, CHAP. XXI.—VERSES 18–22. MARK,
CHAP. XI.—VERSES 12–14; 20–26.

The Barren Fig-Tree.

Matth. xxi. (18) And on returning to the city early in the morning, he was hungry. (19) And seeing a fig-tree by the road, he came to it, and found nothing on it but leaves only, and he says to it, Let there be no fruit from thee in due season. And immediately the fig-tree withered away. (20) And the disciples saw it, and wondered, saying, How quickly the fig-tree has withered away. (21) And Jesus answered and said unto them, Verily, I say unto you, If you have faith, and doubt not, you shall not only do that which is done to this fig-tree, but even if you should say to this mountain, Be thou lifted up and cast into the sea, it shall be done. (22) And all those things which you shall ask in prayer, believing, you shall receive.

Mark xi. (12) And on the morrow, as they were going forth from Bethany, he was hungry. (13) And seeing a fig-tree from afar, having leaves, he went to it, if, perhaps, he might find something on it. And when he came to it, he found nothing on it but leaves, for it was not the season for figs. (14) And Jesus answered and said to it, Let no one eat a fig from thee in the season. And his disciples heard it. (20) And going past early, they saw the fig-tree withered up from the root. (21) And Peter remembering it, saith to him, Rabbi, behold the fig-tree which thou cursedst is withered away. (22) And Jesus answering saith to them, Have faith in God. (23) For verily I say unto you, that if any one shall say to this mountain, Be thou lifted up, and cast into the sea; and do not doubt in his heart, but shall have faith, that

what he says shall be done, it shall be to it as he shall say. (24) Therefore I say unto you, All things whatsoever which you shall ask in prayer, believe that you shall receive them, and it shall be unto you. (25) And when you stand praying, forgive, if you have somewhat against anyone, that your Father in the heavens may also forgive you your trespasses. (26) And if you do not forgive, neither will your Father in the heavens forgive your trespasses.

§ 245. In reading the Gospels, you should never confound what is related under medianimic influence of the words and actions of Jesus, and of the various spirit-manifestations, with the ideas, opinions, and impressions of men relative to his personality, nature, origin, words, and actions. Jesus wished to give his disciples a lesson. You are told that it was not the season for fruit; and he therefore knew that there was no fruit on the tree. Nevertheless he wished his Apostles and those who attended to his lessons to understand plainly that the tree which bears no fruit is condemned, and that man should labour unceasingly for his own progress and advancement, and for that of his brethren. The lesson was to be practical; the fig-tree is nothing; the lesson is everything; if a vine had stood there, he would have destroyed it for the same purpose. Jesus wished to act on minds, and not on matter. The disciples were ignorant of worldly science, but already intelligent in spiritual things, and understood the lesson, for they did not say to Jesus, "Why did you blast the tree which could not bear fruit out of season?" but only "How quickly the fig-tree has withered away!" To this Jesus replied, "Faith can accomplish everything." Was it not as much as to say that his strong will was the cause of what had surprised them? The example which Jesus gave was designed to impress the imagination of those who followed him, by leading them to see the necessity of always being useful. He also wished to teach them the power of the will when based upon faith; for it was necessary that after the Master had left them, they should be the obedient but unconscious instruments of the spirits of the Lord who aided them in the accomplishment of their mission. But considering the state of intelligence and the needs of the age, it was necessary that the lesson should be very forcible to be understood.

The time was still very distant when his words should be explained in spirit and in truth ; and the bulk of the people were material, and required lessons which would impress them materially. You can now understand the phenomenon and its causes. On the mental command of Jesus, and by the influence of his will, the spirits who watch over vegetation instantly withdraw the fluids necessary for material vegetation, from the sap of the fig-tree, and the spiritual essence was removed to another place. The withdrawal of the vital fluids produced the same effect as the wind of the desert, which dries up every plant which it touches. The disciples immediately observed the effect upon the tree, and next day they stopped to examine it again. Thus the two narratives give a double series of words and lessons.

You should also understand the spirit of the words, "Let no fruit grow upon thee in the season," for they condemn the Catholic doctrine of the resurrection of the body. The man who is struck by the angel of deliverance when he least expects it, dies suddenly, like the fig-tree. Is it the body or the spirit which will continue its march towards perfection by expiation in the errant state, and then by re-incarnation ?

The withered fig-tree could yield no more fruit, but the spiritual principle was removed elsewhere, to continue its ascending course in the path of the infinite unity, where everything, according to the will of God, proceeds from the infinitely little to the infinitely great, under spiritual guidance, according to the operation of general and immutable laws, which are the very essence of the Uncreated Creator, and which you call the laws of Nature.

The parable of the barren fig-tree was intended to warn man to make use of the earthly existence which the Lord grants him, to expiate and repair his offences, and to progress with the aid of his guardian angel, and other good spirits. It warns him that the guilty spirit who remains deaf to their friendly inspirations, and rebels, notwithstanding the opportunities given him for expiation, reparation, and progress,

until the time when the darnel shall be separated from the good corn, will then no longer bear fruits on your earth, but will be cast down to inferior worlds corresponding with his degree of guilt, and to what is needful for his progress and advancement. Jesus shows you, on the one hand, the still remaining hope, and the spirits of the Lord persevering in the work, and interceding in favour of the criminal, until they shall have led him into the right path ; but, on the other hand, he also shows you the ungrateful and barren nature which no effort can reach, and which must be removed from a scene where its existence could only be injurious.

We have already given you sufficient explanations of the symbolic meaning of the words spoken by Jesus to Peter and the other disciples.

MATTHEW, CHAP. XXI.—VERSES 23—32. MARK,
CHAP. XI.—VERSES 27—33. LUKE, CHAP. XX.
VERSES 1—8.

Jesus silences the Chief Priests and Elders.

Matth. xxi. (23) And when he came into the Temple, the chief priests and elders of the people, came to him while he was teaching, saying, By what authority do you do these things, and who gave you this authority? (24) And Jesus answered and said to them, I will also ask you one question, and if you answer me, I also will tell you by what authority I do these things. (25) The baptism of John ; whence was it? from heaven or from men? And they debated among themselves, saying, If we should say, From heaven, he will say to us, Why then did you not believe in him? (26) And if we should say, From men, we fear the people, for all regard John as a prophet. (27) And they answered Jesus, and said, We do not know. And he said to them, Neither do I tell you by what authority I do these things, (28) But what think ye? A man had two children, and he went to one of them, and said, Child, go to-day and work in my vineyard. (29) And he answered and said, I do not like ; but afterwards he repented, and went. (30) And going to the other he said the same, and he answered and said, I go, Lord ; and he did not go. (31) Which of these two did the will of his father? They say to him, The first. Jesus saith to them, Verily I say to you, that the taxgatherers and harlots go into the kingdom of God before you. (32) For John came to you in the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him, but the taxgatherers and harlots believed him ; but when you saw it, you did not afterwards repent and believe in him.

Mark xi. (27) And they come again to Jerusalem, and while he was walking about in the Temple, the chief priests and scribes and elders come

to him. (28) And say to him, By what authority doest thou these things, and who gave thee authority to do them? (29) And Jesus answered and said to them, I will also ask you one question, and answer me, and I will tell you by what authority I do these things. (30) Was the baptism of John from heaven, or from men; answer me. (31) And they spoke among themselves, saying, If we shall say, From heaven, he will say, Why then did you not believe in him? (32) But if we shall say, From men, we fear the people, for all considered John to be a prophet. (33) And they answered and said to Jesus, We do not know, And Jesus said to them, Nor do I tell you by what authority I do these things.

Luke xx. (1) And it came to pass on one of those days, as he was teaching the people in the Temple, and preaching the Gospel, the chief priests and scribes rose up with the elders of the people, and spoke to him, saying, (2) Tell us by what authority you do these things, and who it is who has given you this authority. (3) And he answered and said to them, I will also ask you one question, and answer me. (4) Was the baptism of John from heaven, or from men? (5) And they spoke together among themselves, saying, If we say, From heaven, he will say, Why then did you not believe in him? (6) But if we say, From men, all the people will stone us, for they are persuaded that John was a prophet. (7) And they replied that they knew not whence it was. (8) And Jesus said to them, Nor do I tell you by what authority I do these things.

§ 246. Jesus spoke to those who had witnessed the actions of John without being reformed; and, who as they did not understand the source whence he derived his power, would be equally unable to understand, and still less disposed to admit the testimony of the Word. If Jesus had said that his power came from God, he would have provoked the priests, the Scribes and the Pharisees to hasten the moment which should terminate his mission. He therefore avoided answering their question directly; but you may find encouragement for the present, and promises for the future, in his words. He told his adversaries, "The tax-gatherers and harlots go into the kingdom of the heavens before you." These rebellious children were touched by repentance, and came, though late, to work in the vineyard of the Lord; but you, proud men, who hold the highest positions in the church, have said, "Lord, I come;" and you have delayed, and often even drawn back. You will arrive very late indeed in the kingdom of the heavens, for you must first understand your fault, and go into the vineyard of the Lord, and work very hard to make up for lost time; and when you arrive, the tax-gatherers and harlots who repented

PARABLE OF THE WICKED HUSBANDMEN. 277

at the time, and have finished their task, will be waiting to hold out their hands to aid you to enter. There are chief priests, Scribes, and Pharisees in your own days; and they that have ears to hear, let them hear.

MATTHEW, CHAP. XXI.—VERSES 33-41. MARK,
CHAP. XII.—VERSES 1-9. LUKE, CHAP. XX.
VERSES 9-16.

Parable of the Vineyard and the wicked Husbandmen.

Matth. xxi. (33) Hear another parable. A certain man who was a householder planted a vineyard, and hedged it round, and dug a wine press in it, and built a tower, and let it to husbandmen, and went abroad. (34) And when the fruit season drew near, he sent his servants to the husbandmen, to receive its fruits. (35) And the husbandmen seized upon his servants, and one they beat, and one they killed, and one they stoned. (36) Again he sent other servants, more than the first, and they did to them likewise. (37) And at last he sent his son to them, saying, They will reverence my son. (38) And the husbandmen seeing the son, said to each other, This is the heir; come let us kill him, and seize his inheritance. (39) And they seized him and cast him out of the vineyard, and slew him. (40) When, therefore, the Lord of the vineyard shall come, what will he do to these husbandmen? (41) They say to him, He will miserably destroy those wicked men, and hand over the vineyard to other husbandmen, who shall give up to him the fruits in their seasons.

Mark xii. (1) And he began to speak to them in parables. A man planted a vineyard, and hedged it round, and dug a wine-vat, and built a tower, and entrusted it to husbandmen, and went abroad. (2) And in the season he sent a servant to the husbandmen, that he should receive some of the fruit of the vineyard. (3) And they seized him and beat him, and sent him away empty-handed. (4) And again he sent another servant to them, and him they stoned and wounded him in the head, and sent him away shamefully treated. (5) And again he sent another, and him they slew; and many others, and some they beat, and some they killed. (6) But he had still one beloved son, and at last he sent him to them, saying, They will reverence my son. (7) But these husbandmen said to each other, This is the heir, come, let us kill him, and the inheritance shall be ours. (8) And they seized him and slew him, and cast him out of the vineyard. (9) What then will the lord of the vineyard do? He will come and destroy the husbandmen, and give the vineyard to others.

Luke xx. (9) And he began to tell the people this parable. A certain man planted a vineyard, and handed it over to husbandmen, and went abroad for a long time. (10) And in the season he sent a servant to the husbandmen, that they should give him some of the fruit of the vineyard. And the husbandmen beat him, and sent him away empty-handed. (11) And again he sent another servant, and they beat him, and treated him shamefully, and sent him away empty. (12) And again he sent a

third, and they wounded him also, and cast him out. (13) And the Lord of the vineyard said, What shall I do? I will send my beloved son; perhaps they will reverence him when they see him. (14) And when the husbandmen saw him, they debated among themselves, saying, This is the heir; come let us kill him, that the inheritance may be ours. (15) And they cast him out of the vineyard, and slew him. What then shall the lord of the vineyard do to them? (16) He will come and destroy those husbandmen, and will give the vineyard to others. And when they heard it, they said, May it not be thus!

§ 247. This parable is an emblem of the people of Israel. This is the vineyard which the Lord has planted; and the hedge which he made round it denotes the care which he took to preserve the remembrance of his name among the Hebrews. The wine-press which the householder dug in the ground is an allegorical expression used to complete the idea, and to show that nothing had been neglected that the vineyard should yield all that could be obtained from it. The fruit is gathered when it is ripe, but soon spoils, and the juice must be drawn from it by pressing and bruising the outward material part, to extract the wine, which does not change, but lasts for ever. The wine-press, as regards the Jews and other men, is the veiled emblem of experience, expiation, and reincarnation. The tower denotes the indestructible abode of the husbandmen, if they take care of the vineyard; the safe place where they would have preserved the juice of the grape when their labour should have brought it to the necessary quality and purity to be stored up in the tower. The season of ripe fruits is the period when the Jews should have been ready to yield fruits of justice, fit to be gathered for eternity. The servants of the master are the prophets who often came to remind men that they did not walk in the way which had been marked out for them. The fruit-season is near when men have received the lessons needful for their advancement, and ought to be able to profit by them. We need not point out to you the Father's beloved Son, ready, as it appeared to men, to sacrifice his life to yield up to the Father the ripe fruits of the vineyard. The rebellious husbandmen are the Jews from whom the Lord withdraws his protection; for they have destroyed him whom they ought to have loved and revered.

The husbandmen in the parable say, "This is the heir ; come, let us kill him, that the inheritance may be ours." This is a material idea, which only shows man the actions which relate to his present life, and hides from him the consequences which his conduct will bring upon him. Such men only open their eyes to what is material, and shut fast the eyes of the soul. These words are designed to illustrate the blindness of those who persist in refusing to render to God the things which are God's, rejecting all the warnings which they have received, and have no fear of him whom they have offended and continue to offend by their ingratitude and obduracy.

Some of those to whom the words of the parable were applied are still living reincarnated on your earth. The words are applicable to all ; to them as well as to you ; and you may remember that Jesus said, "This generation shall not pass, until you shall see the Son of Man coming in his glory."* The husbandmen in the parable are not changed until the Son has been killed. They are the servants, the messengers of the Lord, who succeed one another, who are changed ; and not the husbandmen. The Jewish nation represents the husbandmen, until the apparent death of Jesus. After the conclusion of his earthly mission, the vineyard was taken away from the wicked husbandmen, and given to others. You, Christians, have taken the place of the Jews, and have been the new husbandmen until now. The vineyard which the Lord has given into your charge is the entire humanity of your planet, both Jews and Gentiles. The hedge surrounding it is the law of love which he sent his beloved Son to preach to men by his teaching and example, that above all things you might become united, apart from all external forms of worship.

The new husbandmen are all who have been called to labour at their individual and collective progress by perfecting themselves and their brethren, and thus causing the vineyard to yield fruits of justice, charity, knowledge, and

* Matth. xxxiv. 34 ; Luke xxi. 32.

love. The wine-press, which is used to extract the essence from the material portion of the fruit, is reincarnation, which, as Jesus has said under the veil of the letter, is the only means by which the spirit who has failed can see God ; for it is the only means of purification and progress which can lead him to regeneration, and enable him to attain to moral perfection. The tower is your planet, which should be the indestructible habitation of the husbandmen in charge of the vine, where they shall store the juice of the grape, when they have brought it to perfection.

The new husbandmen represent the new era, until your own times, under the veil of the letter. They have possessed the vineyard for a time, and after having rendered up the fruits in due season, thought at last, like their predecessors, that it belonged to them. As each fruit-season returns, they yield less and less, and at length they have come to a point when the vine scarcely produces anything, and the Father sends his servants again to demand the fruits which are his due. Do not refuse them, nor reject his servants, the errant or incarnate spirits who come in the name of the Master as messengers of the Lord to recall you to the practice of the simple and sublime morality of Christ. They come to lead you gradually to all truth, and to fraternal unity by the paths of justice, charity, knowledge, and love. Do not reject these servants, the organs of the Spirit of Truth, for then the justice of the Lord will fall upon you, and his Son will come, this time, to cast the guilty husbandmen out of the vineyard. These are they who do not yield up the fruits which they ought to cultivate; and then there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth among those who reject this third manifestation of the love of the Creator. The Son of Man has promised to return in his glory, to choose those worthy to be sons of the Father, as being good labourers in the vineyard. When the time has come for the regeneration of your planet (and it is not far off) men will be separated, as you have been told, and the good will be set on the right hand of the Lord. That is, they will remain on your planet when it is ready to become-

one of the superior worlds. The wicked will be placed on his left, and will be cast into outer darkness. That is, they will first be subjected to expiation in the errant state, and will then be cast down to one of the inferior planets. While this process of the separation of the darnel from the good corn, which will accompany and complete the purification of your earth, is taking place, you must expect to see a renovation of the material race of your globe. This can only be effected by the destruction of the gross matter which envelopes you, which will be gradually replaced by a less and less material essence which will cover your spirit, and bring it nearer and nearer to the fluidic state. But do not suppose that this great change will take place instantaneously. You know that time has no limits to the Lord, and there is no difference to him between yesterday and to-morrow. Every phase of your renovation will be marked by what you call public calamities or plagues. Then the wicked husbandmen will be cast out; and the master of the vineyard is the Lord, who will come when his kingdom is established in all hearts, and will dwell among you; for God reigns in the hearts of the pure.

MATTHEW, CHAP. XXI.—VERSES 42-46. MARK,
CHAP. XII.—VERSES 10-12. LUKE, CHAP. XX.
VERSES 17-19.

*Continuation of the Parable of the Husbandmen in the
Vineyard—Jesus the Chief Corner-Stone.*

Matth. xxi. (42) Jesus says to them, Have you never read in the Scriptures, A stone which the builders rejected, the same has become the head of the corner? This was of the Lord, and it is marvellous in our eyes. (43) Therefore I say unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken away from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof. (44) And whoever shall fall upon this stone shall be dashed to pieces, and upon whomsoever it shall fall, it shall grind him to powder. (45) And when the chief priests and Pharisees heard his parables, they knew that he spoke of them. (46) And when they sought to seize him they feared the multitude, for they looked upon him as a prophet.

Mark xii. (10) Have you not read this text, A stone which the builders rejected, this has been placed in the head of the corner? (11) This was of the Lord, and it is marvellous in our eyes. (12) And they

sought to seize upon him, and they feared the people, for they knew that he spoke the parable against them: And they left him and departed.

Luke xx. (17) And he looked upon them, and said, What then is this that is written, A stone which the builders rejected, this is placed in the head of the corner? (18) And every one who falls upon this stone shall be dashed to pieces, and on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder. (19) And the chief priests and Scribes sought to lay hands upon him that very hour, and they feared the people; for they knew that he had spoken this parable against themselves.

§ 248. The words of Jesus, spoken under cover of the parable, are equally applicable to all ages, and apply to the Scribes and Pharisees of your own days, as well as to those who heard them spoken. He addressed himself to the human period of their life as well as to that of yours.

Jesus personifies the law of love which he preached to men by his teaching and example, and by his doctrine, which is the proclamation, veiled by the letter, of eternal truths. He tells you that it is not his doctrine, but the doctrine of him who sent him. He is the chief corner-stone. Those who reject the stone which is given them to build the edifice which should shelter them throughout eternity, reject the chief corner-stone, which ought to support them; and they dash themselves against it. The Jews rejected Jesus, the messenger and the anointed of the Lord, and they dashed themselves against the stone which should endure for ages on ages. Do not reject it likewise, for the same fate would fall upon yourselves. Spiritism is not the personification of Christ, but his thought, and the continuation and end of his work. Now that the time has come for the reign of the letter which killeth to be replaced by that of the Spirit which giveth life, Jesus, after coming among you himself, sends you the Spirit of Truth, by the spirits of the Lord, his errant or incarnate missionaries. He thus continually sends the servants of the Father to you.

Do not dash yourselves against this foundation-stone of your eternal happiness, and thus cause yourselves to be cast into outer darkness. Do not give yourselves over to death, for the retrogression of the material faculties, which are buried in the fleshly sepulchre which entombs the soul, is hell, with all its terrors and tortures, to the spirit.

In the language of the parable, Jesus tells the chief priests, Scribes and Pharisees, "The kingdom of God shall be taken away from you, and given to a people bringing forth the fruits thereof." This kingdom is indeed taken from all men who are proud, selfish, avaricious, sensual, intolerant, ambitious, fanatical, or materialistic; for such vices, and the predominance of matter, or giving way to material appetites, are so many obstacles to the progress, development, and perfection of the Spirit.

On the other hand, the kingdom of God is given to all men, who (although they may not have seen, or been able to comprehend the light) have entered sincerely on the new path which Christ has opened. The Spirit of Truth has come to guide you to follow it safely and surely, and it will be given to all who, though they may have dwelt far from the Church, and lived at any period, have entered (apart from all external forms of worship) into the sanctuary of the just by practising the law of love, and bow themselves before the great Creator with gratitude and humility, and thus bring forth the fruits of justice and charity.

New workers in the vineyard, know that the vineyard which has been entrusted to you is all mankind. Cause it to bring forth its fruits, and hold yourselves always ready at each returning season to give them up to the servants whom the Lord sends to demand them. The commandment is, "Love one another." Teach your brethren on earth that the condition of the personal progress of each and all is collective progress; and that it will be rendered to each according to his works. Work actively and unceasingly at fraternal unity by gathering all men under your banner of love and charity. Wave the spiritual light above your heads that it may spread its radiance further and further to all points of your globe, and enlighten your humanity on its origin, its aims, and its destiny. Teach and propagate, by word and example, the law of love, and the material way of practising it according to moral and intellectual order, and thus prepare for the advent of the Spirit, and the fulfilment of the promised time when men shall no more worship

the Father on the mountain, nor in Jerusalem, but shall reject all the commandments of men, and follow only the commandments of God, which his Christ proclaimed as including all the law and the prophets. Men will be the true worshippers of the Father in spirit and in truth, when they are made one by the communion of thoughts, hearts and actions, and are closely united by the practice of love and fraternity. They will then assemble, in the name of Jesus, who will be in the midst of them, to worship their Creator by mutual prayer and instruction, under the leadership of the most worthy, and the most deserving, as the most advanced morally and intellectually, who will be unanimously chosen, for the Holy Spirit will really be with men when they have thus become true members of the Church of Christ.

LUKE, CHAP. XIV.—VERSES 1-6.

Cure of Dropsy.

(1) And it came to pass that he went into the house of one of the rulers of the Pharisees on the Sabbath, to eat bread, and they were watching him closely. (2) And behold there was a certain man in his presence who had the dropsy. (3) And Jesus answered and spoke to the lawyers and Pharisees, saying, Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath-day? (4) And they were silent. And he took him and healed him, and sent him away. (5) And he answered them, and said, If the ox or ass of one of you should fall into a well, will he not immediately pull him out on the Sabbath-day? (6) And they were not able to answer him again to these things.

§ 249. The sick man was brought into the presence of Jesus as a snare, to tempt him; so that if Jesus obeyed his generous impulses, and healed him, he might be accused of breaking the Sabbath, while if his scrupulous observance of the Sabbath stood in the way, he might be accused of want of charity. We have already given you sufficient explanations both respecting the Sabbath, and the magnetic character of the cures performed by Jesus. Men will not seek for causes to understand and explain effects. What is the primary cause of dropsy? A thinness of the blood, from diminution of the chyle, which is replaced by watery par-

ticles. It is often caused by privations or excesses which alter the quality of the blood. Well-directed magnetic human action may check the progress of this decomposition, and effect a cure ; but time and perseverance are needed for this, for the instruments are not yet sufficiently pure to transmit the fluids which they employ in their full strength. Jesus, who was a perfect magnetizer, employed the healing principles in all their purity, and consequently with full efficacy. You are not told that the swelling produced by the disease ceased immediately, but that the patient was cured. The evil was destroyed, and equilibrium was then re-established in consequence of the magnetic action of Jesus, and the fluids which he had directed into the organism. The disease had reached one of its last phases, and the patient was too weak to move. Jesus sent him away, having given him strength to retire, which was the prelude of the visible cure ; the subsidence of the swelling.

LUKE, CHAP. XIV.—VERSES 7-11.

Humility.

(7) And he spoke a parable to those who were bidden, noticing how they chose out the first places, (8) When you are invited by anyone to a wedding, do not sit down in the chief place, lest he should have invited a more honourable man than you. (9) And he who invited you both, should come and say to you, Give up your place to this man; and then you begin with shame to take the last place. (10) But when you are invited, go and sit down in the last place, that when he who invited you shall come, he may say to you, Friend, go up higher ; then you will have honour among those who are sitting with you. (11) For every one who shall exalt himself shall be humbled, and he who humbleth himself shall be exalted.

§ 250. Jesus frequently repeats this lesson of humility under various forms in different times and places, because humility is the source of all virtues, all progress, and all moral and intellectual elevation ; whereas pride is the most difficult vice to uproot from the heart of man, and the chief cause of the vices which degrade the spirit, and of the falls and sufferings which it endures.

LUKE, CHAP. XIV.—VERSES 12-15.

Disinterestedness.

(12) And he also said to him who invited him, When you make a dinner or a supper, do not ask your friends, nor brothers, nor relations, nor rich neighbours, lest they invite you again, and a return be made you. (13) But when you make a feast, invite the poor, the maimed, the lame, and the blind; (14) And you shall be blessed, for they cannot recompense you; but you shall be recompensed at the resurrection of the just. (15) And a certain man among the guests hearing this, said, Blessed is whosoever shall eat bread in the kingdom of God.

§ 251. Man is always liable to think exclusively of himself, and the good which he does is often regarded as a loan on which he expects large interest. If you look into most human actions, you will discern the desire of being paid for what is done; either by the gratitude of the recipient of your bounty, or by the praise of the world, or by the merit of the action in the sight of God. These motives, especially the last, may be noble; but they ought not to be exclusive. You never ought to consider the advantage which you may derive from a good thought or action. Your chief aim should be to show your gratitude to the Lord. What would you say to your child if he would not fulfil any of his duties towards you, or towards his brothers and sisters, without directly coming to say, "I have done that; what reward will you give me?" Would you not answer, "The first reward is that of duty performed. In acting thus, you have fulfilled but a very small part of your duty, and you have taken away its merit by ascribing too much to it, and asking for a reward, at the promptings of pride or selfishness."

Do not stop at the letter which killeth, but always seek for the Spirit which giveth life, in the words of Jesus. He certainly does not condemn family and social gatherings, but teaches humility, always and everywhere, in the great human family. He taught men that the luxury, ostentation, and pride of festivals, based on self-interest, vanity, and sensuality, squander superfluous wealth which should be given to the poor, who lack what is needful in the material, moral, and intellectual order. These useless feasts should be

replaced by feasts of material charity which sustain the body by food, clothing, and shelter; and moral charity, which nourishes and develops the soul. Jesus adapted his language to the intelligence of material men that he might make a strong impression upon them.

(Verses 13-15.)—These words are easily intelligible. From a human point of view, they relate to those who share the happiness of the life of the just; and as every thought of material men links itself to matter, the idea of celestial feasts presented itself to the mind of the Jew. The resurrection of the just is the return of the just man to his country. He who has lived in the sight of the Lord during his human pilgrimage will then be received by the Lord. As regards the spirit, the resurrection of the just is its exemption from the necessity of returning to the lower worlds of trials and expiations, and its admission to worlds superior to yours.

MATTHEW, CHAP. XXII.—VERSE 1-14. LUKE,
CHAP. XIV.—VERSES 16-24.

Parable of the Feast.

Matth. xxii. (1) And Jesus again answered and spoke to them in parables, saying, (2) The kingdom of the heavens shall be likened to a man who was a king, who prepared wedding feasts for his son. (3) And he sent his servants to summon those who were invited to the feasts, and they would not come. (4) Again he sent other servants, saying, Tell those who were invited, Behold, I have prepared my dinner, my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready; come to the wedding-feasts. (5) And they took no heed of it, and went away; one to his own field, and one to his business. (6) And the remainder seized his servants, and assaulted them and slew them. (7) And when the king heard it, he was angry, and sent his armies and destroyed those murderers and burned up their city. (8) Then he saith to his servants, The wedding indeed is ready, but those who were invited were not worthy. (9) Therefore go out to the outlets of the roads, and invite whoever you find to the feasts. (10) And those servants went out into the roads, and assembled all whom they found, both bad and good, and the wedding was provided with guests. (11) And the king coming in to see the guests, saw a man there who had not put on a wedding garment. (12) And he says to him, Comrade, how did you come in here without having a wedding garment? And he was silenced. (13) Then the king said to the attendants, Bind his feet, and hands, and take him and cast him out into the outer darkness; there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. (14) For many are called, but few are chosen.

Luke xiv. (16) And he said to him, A certain man made a great feast, and invited many. (17) And he sent his servant at the time of the feast to say to those who were invited, Come, for all things are now ready, (18) And all at once began to make excuses. The first said to him, I have bought a field, and I am obliged to go and see it; I pray thee have me excused. (19) And another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I am going to try them; I pray thee have me excused. (20) And another said, I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come. (21) And this servant went and told his master these things. Then the householder was angry, and said to his servant, Go out quickly into the squares and streets of the city, and bring in here the poor and the maimed and the lame and the blind. (22) And the servant said, Lord, I have done as thou hast commanded, and there is still room. (23) And the master said to his servant, Go out into the roads and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled. (24) For I say unto you that none of those men who were invited shall taste of my feast.

§ 252. The meaning of these two parables is the same, although they were spoken by Jesus at different times and places. Their meaning is similar to that of the parable of the wicked husbandmen in the vineyard. The king who invited guests to his son's wedding, and the householder who made a great feast, represent the Lord, who calls to himself those who are reared in the knowledge of his name, and who should come without delay to share in the joys of eternal life. Those who do not respond to his appeal are those who have heard the voice of the messengers of the Lord, and have not answered, but have rejected them. Then divine justice falls upon the ungrateful ones, and they are rejected until they have recognized and expiated their offences.

The servant of the householder is sent into the squares and streets of the city to seek for the poor, the maimed, the lame, and the blind to bring them to the great feast. After he has done so, and there is still room left, he is sent out again to the roads and hedges to compel all others to enter, that the house may be filled. All men, whoever they are, should partake of the heavenly feast, and should advance morally and intellectually, to become rich in heart and intelligence by humility, knowledge, charity, and love, to recover the freedom of their faculties, and to walk in the path of progress. They then recover the spiritual life of the soul, and see the light more and more, as they advance

safely and surely, towards perfection. But you are also told in the parable of the wedding of the king's son, that it is needful to be clothed in a wedding garment before being admitted to the feast. The king's servants are sent out into the roads to gather together the good and bad. All alike were summoned to the wedding-feast, but before entering the banqueting-hall they were required to lay aside their soiled garments. This is the indispensable condition, and whoever does not conform to it will be cast into outer darkness; that is, he will be banished to the inferior planets, far from those happy regions where the spirits who have clothed themselves in wedding garments by regeneration, will complete their purification until the moment when they shall attain perfection, and assume the spotless robe which alone permits them to enter the eternal palace, in those pure, celestial, and divine spheres where none can approach or dwell but pure spirits.

Jesus spoke of only one man being found among the guests without a wedding garment, although the king's servants had assembled all, both bad and good, and the hall was full; to show, under cover of the parable, that, when all alike are called, nearly all will understand the happiness which is before them, and only a very small minority will be hardened, and will resist the efforts of the servants of God to induce them to assume the wedding garment before entering the banqueting hall.

(Matth. xxii. 13.)—This will be the fate of those who have answered the call, but who have not exerted themselves sufficiently to enter worthily into the presence of the Master, as well as of those who refuse to come to the wedding. Indeed, that man is the most guilty of all who listens to the voice of the messengers, and answers, "Here I am," but who fails to render himself worthy to appear in the presence of him who has called him.

(Matth. xxii. 14.)—These words apply not only to the man who was rejected because he was not fittingly clothed, but to all who had previously closed their ears and hearts to the voice which called them. Those who endeavour to

explain the meaning of the words of Jesus, should remember that while applying to future ages, they have also a present and positive application which might impress the material spirits to whom they were addressed. Jesus left the advantages of reincarnation under a veil. He could not then say, "Those who refused to enter the banqueting hall, and who beat, ill-treated, and slew the messengers of the Lord, were the same as those who were afterwards assembled from the roads, and assumed the wedding garments with joy. Those who were invited as guests to the great supper by the householder's servant, because everything was ready, and who refused to come, were the same as the poor, the maimed, the lame, and the blind who were afterwards brought from the squares and streets of the town ; or the same as those who were found on the roads and by the hedgerows, and were compelled to enter that the house might be filled." If Jesus had thus spoken, men would have said, "Why need we hurry ? The banqueting hall will always be open to us ; we can always enjoy the supper which is always ready, and we shall always be invited to share in it."

These material spirits were incapable of understanding that although it has long been true to say of your humanity that many are called, but few are chosen, all must be chosen, during the period comprised in eternity. They were incapable of understanding the conditions by which the guilty spirit, who, like all others, has been called, may eventually succeed in being chosen, under the action of the immutable law of suffering, expiation, and progress, which is accomplished by re-birth, and which leads the guilty spirit in the ascending course of successive and progressive lives, from the primitive worlds to the worlds of trials and expiations, and from these to the regenerative worlds where it assumes the wedding garment, to enter the happy worlds. When it has once assumed this stainless robe, and has attained to moral perfection, it passes on to the celestial or divine worlds, and becomes one of the elect of God, by taking rank among the pure spirits. The hour of the spiritual revelation had not yet arrived ; and many centuries

were still to pass before your own days, the predicted era of the regeneration which is now being prepared by the Spirit of Truth.

These parables applied to the Jews as neighbours and invited guests of the Lord; and (correlatively, as the Jews understood) to the Gentiles, as those who were assembled, good and bad, poor, maimed, lame, and blind, in the squares and streets of the town, and afterwards along the roads and hedges. They apply also to the age in which you are now living, when those who ought to have listened to the voices of the servants, during so many ages, are deaf and indifferent; and to those whom the Spirit of Truth is about to unite in one assembly, animated by one thought only, to assume the same robe of purity. It is now that in the whole banqueting hall, "only one" will be found unworthy to remain. That is, compared to the number of those who accept the invitation with joy, very few will not seek to make themselves worthy to share in the feast.

MATTHEW, CHAP. XXII.—VERSES 15-22. MARK,
CHAP. XII.—VERSES 13-17. LUKE, CHAP. XX.
VERSES 20-26.

God and Cæsar.

Matth. xxii. (15) Then the Pharisees went and consulted together how to entrap him in his talk. (16) And they sent to him their disciples, with the Herodians, saying, Teacher, we know that thou art true, and teachest the way of God in truth, neither carest thou for any man, for thou dost not regard the face of men. (17) Therefore tell us; what thinkest thou? Is it lawful to give tribute to Cæsar, or not? (18) And Jesus knowing their wickedness, said to them, Why tempt ye me, ye hypocrites? (19) Shew me the tribute money. (20) And they brought him a denarius. And he says to them, Whose image and superscription is this? (21) They say to him, Cæsar's. Then he says to them, Render then to Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's, and to God the things which are God's. (22) And when they heard it, they were astonished, and they went away, and left him.

Mark xii. (13) And they sent to him some of the Pharisees and Herodians, that they might catch him in his talk. (14) And they came and said to him, Teacher, we know that thou art true and dost not trouble thyself about anybody, for thou dost not regard the face of men, but teachest the way of God in truth. Is it lawful to pay tribute to Cæsar, or not? Shall we give, or not give? (15) And he, seeing their

hypocrisy, said to them, Why do you tempt me? Bring me a denarius, that I may see it. (16) And they brought it, and he says to them, Whose image and superscription is this? And they said unto him, Cæsar's. (17) And Jesus answered and said to them, Render to Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's, and to God the things which are God's. And they wondered at him.

Luke xx. (20) And they watched him, and sent spies that they might find fault with him in his talk, that they might deliver him over to the rule and authority of the governor. (21) And they asked him, saying, Teacher, we know that thou speakest and teachest rightly, and acceptest not the face, but teachest the way of God in truth. (22) Is it lawful for us to give tribute to Cæsar, or not? (23) And perceiving their villany, he said to them, Why tempt ye me? Show me a denarius. (24) Whose image and superscription is this? And they answer him, Cæsar's. (25) And he said to them, Render therefore to Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's, and to God the things which are God's. (26) And they could not lay hold of his speech before the people, and they wondered at his answer, and were silent.

§ 253. These words should prove to all that whatever has been pretended, Jesus did not come to preach the overthrow of society, but only moral progress. Man can and ought to combine his duties as a citizen with his duties towards his Creator. Respect for the laws is a duty, and often a trial to men. Let the conduct of man be such as to ameliorate those laws which press hardly, and to lighten the burden which he bears with so many sufferings and complaints, and with so much insubordination and rebellion. Let everyone work at the reforms which are suited to his position; the monarch as well as the humble artisan; and the yoke will break of itself, for it will be so much lightened that man will no longer feel it, and the laws will become mild to all, for everyone will walk straight in his own path, without needing to be forcibly kept in it.

If the authorities oppress you, and the laws seem unjust, you should nevertheless submit. Neither revolutions, nor downcast thrones nor broken laws will give you liberty; for liberty springs from obedience, duty, purity of heart, and love and charity, which imply and include self-respect, and respect for others. When you understand the power of love and charity practised aright, and the manner of practising them in their principles and consequences, in all their aspects and applications in the physical, moral, and intellectual order, both as regards social, family, and private

life ; and when all your thoughts and actions are conformed to this, you will have solved the great problem of liberty for all, and will have attained the end for which you have shed so much blood to no purpose, and for which so much blood has yet to flow.* Liberty, fraternity, and equality : these words, whence spring all the social disorders which dethrone kings, and crush down nations, are nevertheless the sons of love and charity, and it is only by this holy union that you can attain to them, now and for ever.

§ 254. How can we reconcile the words, "Render unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's, and to God the things which are God's," with the revolutions and changes which take place among nations and governments?

Pause and reflect. Have you yet arrived at the point where you ought to be, and must you not be renovated before you can attain the end? If you understand to-day, the work of redemption would not have to be postponed to to-morrow, but how great is your blindness, although you consider yourselves so enlightened! You are still of those who shed blood to fertilize the ground ; who kindle war to obtain peace, and who burn down that you may build up again. Blind as you are, have you yet arrived at the point where you can see your way clearly? Deaf as you are, have you reached the point where you can hear your true interests? Ah, if you would but listen to our voices, and if all would practise that love and charity which we preach, fire and sword would no longer blaze in your hands, blood would no longer flow in your gutters, and your harvests would no longer be destroyed, and the horrors of famine would no longer devour the ear and the flower, the oak and the blade of grass. But answer this: Are you charitable? Do you love one another? Do you love God above all things, and your neighbour as yourselves?

The words of Jesus, "Render unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's, and to God the things which are God's," are words of the future ; many centuries must pass away before they will be rightly understood and practised. It is

* These words were medianimically dictated in August, 1863.

not so yet ; but they will be fulfilled when you and Cæsar render to God the things which are God's by practising the double love of God and the neighbour. Then will fraternity lead to equality and liberty for yourselves and all others, in peace and order, and in the hierarchy which will have its source, principle, and rules only in the degree of purity, and moral and intellectual progress which you have acquired.

§ 255. Is it correct to say that the temporal power has overthrown the spiritual power by these principles ?

If the words of Jesus had been rightly understood, the temporal power of the Popes would never have existed, and the struggle between the heads of the Church and the princes of the earth, would never have taken place ; and discord, hatred, and war would never have found entrance among the children of the Lord. If the words of Jesus had been rightly understood, the Church would always have walked in the paths of humility, disinterestedness, and love, and would always have rendered to Cæsar the things which were Cæsar's, and to God the things that are God's. From the example which she would thus have given of every duty and virtue towards God and man, in social, family, and private life, she would always have lived in harmony with Cæsar. She would have taught and exhorted all men, both by precept and example, to practise material, moral, and intellectual tolerance, charity, justice, love, and fraternity. She would have urged men on to labour and study, and the desire of personal and collective progress through knowledge, humility, disinterestedness, and love. She would have taught them to seek for liberty in the truth of the Lord, which is the inheritance which he has given to man, in liberty of thought and understanding. Liberty of conscience, reason, and free examination, lead to the search for truth in the successive and progressive revelations, in order more and more to fulfil the words of Christ, who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life, and who was to be the object of the contradictions of men. "There is nothing secret which shall not be known, and nothing hidden which shall not be known, and proclaimed in public."

MATTHEW, CHAP. XXII.—VERSES 23-33. MARK,
CHAP. XII.—VERSES 18-27. LUKE, CHAP. XX.

VERSES 27-40.

The Resurrection.

Matth. xxii. (23) In that day Sadducees came to him, who say that there is no resurrection, and asked him saying, (24) Teacher, Moses said, If any one shall die childless, his brother shall marry his wife, and raise up seed to his brother. (25) And there were among us seven brothers, and the first having married, died, and having no issue, left his wife to his brother. (26) Likewise the second and the third up to the seventh. (27) And last of all the woman died also. (28) Therefore in the resurrection whose wife will she be of the seven, for they all had her? (29) And Jesus answered and said, Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God. (30) For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like the angels of God in heaven. (31) And concerning the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what was spoken to you by God, saying, (32) I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living. (33) And the multitudes hearing this were astonished at his teaching.

Mark xii. (18) And the Sadducees came to him, who say that there is no resurrection, and they asked him, saying, (19) Teacher, Moses wrote for us that if any one's brother should die and leave a wife, without having had children, that his brother should take his wife, and raise up seed to his brother. (20) There were seven brethren, and the first took a wife, and died, leaving no issue. (21) And the second took her and died, and he also left no issue. And the third in like manner. (22) And the seven took her and left no issue. Last of all, the woman died also. (23) In the resurrection, when they shall arise, whose wife shall she be, for the seven had her to wife? (24) And Jesus answered and said to them, Do ye not err on this account, not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God? (25) For when they shall arise from the dead, they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like the angels of God in the heavens. (26) And concerning the dead, that they rise, have you not read in the book of Moses, that God spoke to him at the bush, saying, I am the God of Abraham and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? (27) God is not the God of the dead but of the living; therefore do ye greatly err.

Luke xx. (27) And certain of the Sadducees came to him, who deny that there is a resurrection, and asked him, (28) Saying, Teacher, Moses wrote to us that if any one's brother shall die, having a wife, and he shall die childless, that his brother shall take his wife, and raise up seed to his brother. (29) Then there were seven brethren, and the first took a wife, and died childless. (30) And the second took the wife and he died childless. (31) And the third took her, and in like manner the seven also. (32) And they left no children, and died; and last of all the woman died also. (33) Therefore in the resurrection whose wife will she be? for the seven had her to wife. (34) And Jesus answered and said to them, The sons of this age marry and are given in marriage. (35) But they who shall be accounted worthy to win that age, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry nor are given in

marriage. (36) For neither can they die henceforth ; for they are like the angels, and are the sons of God, being the sons of the resurrection. (37) And that the dead rise again, Moses also testifies at the bush, when he calls the Lord the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. (38) And God is not the God of the dead, but of the living, for all live to him. (39) And certain of the Scribes answered and said, Teacher, thou hast spoken well. (40) And after that, they did not dare to ask him anything.

§ 256. Are not these verses intelligible in themselves, and is not the language of Jesus clear and precise ? He teaches faith in eternal life, apart from anything relating to matter. The Resurrection is the final return to the eternal country, at the time when the spirit has arrived at so high an elevation that it is no longer necessary for it to inhabit material worlds, or for reincarnation to take place according to the laws of reproduction, as is the case at present on your earth. The man whose spirit has risen above these phases of material incarnations cannot die any more, for in these exalted conditions incarnation, or rather incorporation, is effected by the spirit himself, and he appears suddenly upon the planet. When the spirit quits the superior world which he inhabits, he changes the conditions of his existence by returning to spiritual life, but he is not dead in the human sense in which Jesus used the word, and according to the meaning in which you still employ it on your earth. "The angels," to whom the dead shall be equal when they have risen again, and been deemed worthy to become the sons of God, signify both the good spirits who have arrived at the lofty conditions of which we have just spoken, and the pure spirits.

As Spiritists, you can readily understand the conclusion of the answer of Jesus to the Sadducees. When God sent a superior spirit to say to Moses in his name, "I am the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob," did not the words imply that they were still living ; and would he have spoken thus if the soul or spirit did not survive the body ? Thus God proclaimed the survival of the soul, and its immortality and individuality after bodily death ; and the permanent and immortal life of spirits, who all live under the Father's eye either in the corporeal or in the spiritual state.

Jesus endorsed this teaching afresh, when he reminded the Sadducees and his disciples, and through them all men, of these words. Thus God prepared future generations to understand that spiritual life is the primitive and normal state of the spirit, and that death is nothing more than the end of a temporary exile, when the spirit lays aside the body, which was only a covering assumed for trials, reparation, and progress, and which brought with it only a momentary change in his normal life.

The Sadducees were the materialists of that age. They regarded God as the Architect who rears the building, and man as the stone which crumbles into powder with the lapse of time. Are there not some among you whose reasoning is equally fallacious ; men who admit the existence of God, but who deny the existence and immortality of the soul ?

§ 257. How was the manifestation related in Ex. iii. 1-6 accomplished ?

As God does not communicate directly with men, it was a spirit-manifestation. You are not told that Moses saw God, but only heard his voice. The superior spirit sent by the Lord assumed a luminous, but not a human form, and produced a dazzling light. Moses was a physical, clairaudient, and clairvoyant medium, but had it been otherwise, he would equally have witnessed what took place. You know that when a spirit has arrived at perfection, and become perfectly pure, he is the master of nature, and can bend all the fluids to his will, according to necessity and circumstances. The superior spirit produced a dazzling light, which led Moses to believe that the bush was on fire ; and likewise an articulate human voice, by his command of the fluids, and by means of his perispirit, which he had assimilated to your earthly regions.

MATTHEW, CHAP. XXII.—VERSES 34-40.

CHAP. XII.—VERSES 28-34. LUKE, CHAP.
VERSES 25-28.*Love of God and of the Neighbour.*

Matth. xxii. (34) And the Pharisees hearing that he had said to the Sadducees, gathered around him, (35) And one of them, a lawyer, questioned him, tempting him, and saying, (36) What command in the Law is great? (37) And Jesus said to him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. (38) This is the first and great commandment. (39) And the second is like unto it. Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. (40) On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.

Mark xii. (28) And one of the Scribes came to him, having heard them debating together, and perceiving that he answered them well, Which is the first commandment of all? (29) He answered and said to him, This is the first of all the commandments. Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord. (30) And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength; this is the first commandment. (31) And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself; no other commandment is greater than these. (32) And the Scribe said to him, In truth, Teacher, thou hast answered well; for God is one, and there is none other but him. (33) And thou shalt love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the strength, and to love the neighbour as thyself is better than all whole burnt-offerings and sacrifices. And when Jesus saw that he replied intelligently, he said to him, Thou art not far from the kingdom of God. And no one can enter it without these things.

Luke x. (25) And behold a certain lawyer stood up, tempting him, and saying, Teacher, what shall I do that I may gain eternal life? (26) And he said to him, What is written in the Law? he answered, saying, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and thy neighbour as thyself. (28) And Jesus said to him, Thou hast answered rightly; do this and thou shalt live.

§ 258. Love the Lord your God above all things, for he is the source and life of all that exists; he is the tender Father of all that lives; he is the just Judge of your actions. Love the Lord your God above all, for this love will give you strength to fulfil all your duties and to acquire all virtues. The love of God is the love of the soul to which he has given the hope of eternal life; it is the hope born of faith which kindles your heart and gives birth to charity.

Love your neighbour as yourself, for if you do not possess this great fraternal love, you will be destitute of the actions to which it leads, and will be unfruitful branches. The love of God leads to submission, resignation, and hope; and it is practised by reverence for the laws of God. The love of one's neighbour as one's self leads to charity, and without charity you would be devoid of works. Charity is the aid which you extend to your brethren with intelligence and feeling, by the right hand which lets not the left know what is done.

You must be gentle and humble to be charitable, for pride repels the poor, and however great his poverty, it makes your aid, whether material, intellectual, or moral, painful to him. You must be gentle and humble to be charitable, for charity and humility move the most intractable, encourage the most timid, comfort the most afflicted, and purify the foulest; but let not your humility and charity be that of the lips only, for you would then be no longer charitable. When you help the man who has no bread to eat, do not let him know that you have more than you require, nor let him think that you are only fulfilling a duty; but instead of this, say, "My brother, I am glad to be able to come to your aid to-day, and I hope you will not forget me when you may be able to help me in your turn." When you help the man whose intelligence is darkened, do not let him perceive the extent of your light. Do not dazzle or humiliate him, but say, "My brother, I know very little, but I am ready to teach you what I know, if you do not know it; do as much for me, for you can render me a like service." When you help the man who requires the support of your sympathy, do not let him feel that you lend to him to receive a hundred-fold what you advance, but say, "My brother, I love thee because thou art the son of my Father; I love thee because thou art suffering; thy tears make me weep, and thy sorrows likewise afflict me. Love me as I love thee; and let me find in thy heart the echo of what vibrates in mine, for it is in love alone that we find courage and strength to go to Him who is all love. The source is near him and with him, but

it flows forth in incalculable streams, and bathes us in its freshness. I am happy in loving thee, if thou lovest me."

Never let your inferiors, whoever they may be, feel that you are aware of your superiority. Never let them know that you understand the value of the love and service which you render them, for then the service would oppress them, and the love would freeze them.

Love God above all things. This is to submit to all the laws which are included in love; it is to love your neighbour as yourself. Love God with all your heart and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength. This is to love him with all your thoughts, above all things, and to love all things for love of him.

We call your special attention to the words spoken by Jesus to the lawyer, and to the reply of the latter. The Master approved his reply, and proclaimed its wisdom by saying, "Thou art not far from the kingdom of God." Yes; that man is not far from the kingdom of God (or, in other words, is making rapid progress in the path which leads to moral perfection) who believes that the Lord God of Israel is the only God, that there is but one indivisible God, and none but he, and who loves him above all things, and his neighbour as himself. He perceives that this double love is greater than all burnt-offerings and sacrifices, for he is then the worshipper of the Father in spirit and in truth, loving all men as his brethren, and acting like a brother towards them, apart from all external forms of religion. He is the true worshipper of the Father, because he practises the two commandments which he recognizes as including all the law and the prophets, and which thus constitute but one—the whole of the Divine Law in its principles and consequences; the one only religion of God, the universal religion of humanity which is destined to lead men to unity, by fellowship and fraternity, and thus to the fulfilment of their destinies.

To love God above all things, and your neighbour as yourself is greater than all burnt-offerings and sacrifices, This is equally true in all ages. The external symbols of any religion whatever are nothing in the sight of God; but

works are everything. "All the Law and the Prophets are contained in these two commandments." Their practice leads man to fulfil all his material, moral, and intellectual duties in the great human family, from every point of view, both in social, family, and private life. "Do this, and thou shalt live." Such works lead rapidly to eternal life; that life where the spirit walking in the paths of moral perfection, no longer dies, being freed from the bonds of matter, and the restraints of the flesh.

By repeating the words of Deuteronomy (vi. 5), "Hear, O Israel, the Lord your God is one Lord," and by saying to the lawyer, "Thou hast answered well, and art not far from the kingdom of God." Jesus sanctioned what he had just said. "The truth is that there is but one God, and that there is none other but him." He also formally rejected and excluded any divinity for himself as the Christ, by proclaiming God to be One and Indivisible, as Moses had already proclaimed him; and he thus established this faith as the basis of Christianity as well as of Judaism.

Jesus never desired to arrogate divinity to himself. Observe that he never gives himself the title of God, whereas he often speaks of God as One. He declared that his Father was greater than he; and in the last solemn words which he addressed to God previous to his sacrifice, he said, "Thou, my Father, who art the only true God" (John xvii. 3).

The necessities of the age required that the question should remain where it was till the moment when human intelligence should be sufficiently developed to receive the mysteries of the mission of Jesus, and sufficiently humble not to demand that God himself should stoop to men to redeem them from their faults.

LUKE, CHAP. X.—VERSES 29-37.

Parable of the good Samaritan.

(29) But he, wishing to justify himself, said to Jesus, And who is my neighbour? (30) And Jesus replied, saying, A certain man went down

from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell in with robbers, and they stripped him, and beat him, and departed, leaving him half dead. (31) And it happened by chance that a certain priest went down by that road, and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. (32) And in like manner a Levite, who was near the place, came and looked at him, and passed by on the other side. (33) But a certain Samaritan who was travelling came up to him, and when he saw him, he had compassion on him, (34) And went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring over them oil and wine. And having mounted him on his own beast, he brought him to an inn, and took care of him. (35) And when he was starting off on the morrow, he took out two denarii, and gave them to the host, and said to him, Take care of him, and whatever more you spend, I will pay you when I return. (36) Which of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour to the man who fell among the robbers? (37) And he said, He who took pity on him. Then Jesus said to him, Go and do thou likewise.

§ 259. God looks on all his children with the same paternal eye, whatever their country, language, or religion. Men, you are all brethren, and should therefore practise charity of mind, heart, and action towards one another. Do not repulse any of your brethren, because their actions are less worthy than your own. Never condemn them ; never ; for you would then resemble the Pharisees, the Levites, and the chief men among the Jews.

Imitate the Good Samaritan, and aid all who are in want, without inquiring into the cause of their fall, or asking if they are able to walk straight after you have relieved them. Begin by succouring them ; and if they repulse you then, depart ; but be always ready to return immediately. You should not only cause the wounded to be taken care of, but should first take care of them yourselves, to the full extent of your means, strength, heart, and intelligence ; and if your occupations permit, attend to them entirely yourselves. If your brother should fall again, even by his own fault, show him so much gentleness, patience, and good will, that he need not fear to lean upon you ; for you will then sustain his tottering steps, give fresh vigour to his weak head, and restore warmth and life to his paralyzed heart. You should carefully study the parable of the Good Samaritan, for, however numerous the lessons which have been drawn from this example that Jesus has set before you, you will always find something to learn and meditate upon. Learn to practise its teachings.

In this parable, Jesus represents charity as practised by the Samaritan, whom the Jews regarded as a heretic and accursed; while those who were deficient in charity were the orthodox priest and Levite. He had a double object in saying to the lawyer, "Go, and do thou likewise." In the first place, he desired to show mankind that all are brethren, whoever they may be, and that pride leads to a fall by blinding them to the duties which they ought to practise; for there are neither heretics nor orthodox in the sight of God; and the only way of salvation is charity. Jesus thus condemned, both then and for ever afterwards, all differences and antipathies arising from outward opinions and forms of worship, and the dogmatism and intolerance which result from them. He proclaimed that faith without works is nothing, and that faith, in the eyes of God, does not consist in human dogmas, which are the result of the false and presumptuous interpretations of men, but consists exclusively in that charity which implies the *practice* of justice, love, pity, and fraternity. Jesus also desired to condemn from the first that maxim of the Roman Church, "Out of the Church, no salvation;" and by condemning this, to set forward as the only truth: "Without charity, no salvation." Yes, there is no salvation without that charity which is practised by the love of God above all things, and of the neighbour as one's self; the neighbour, whoever he is; whether acquaintance or stranger, friend or enemy. Has not Jesus said, "Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who persecute you, and slander you?"

LUKE, CHAP. X.—VERSES 38-42.

Jesus at the house of Martha.

(38) And it came to pass as they were travelling that he entered a certain village, and a certain woman named Martha entertained him in her house. (39) And she had a sister called Mary, and she sat at the feet of Jesus, and listened to his discourse, (40) But Martha was cumbered about much serving, and stood by, and said, Lord, does it not trouble you that my sister leaves me to serve alone? Therefore, tell her to help me. (41) And Jesus answered and said to her, Martha,

thou art anxious and troubled about many things. (42) But there is one thing needful, and Mary hath chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from her.

§ 260. These words have often been strained by false human interpretations according to the letter, to authorize a religious life apart from all material cares. This was not the Master's intention ; Martha troubled herself more than necessary about the needs of the body, and forgot that what was necessary would be quite enough. She desired to make a display, notwithstanding her humble station ; and it was for this that Jesus reproved her. Man ought to care for the preservation of his being. This is an absolute law which he must not depart from, but he ought not to neglect the claims of his spirit, and sacrifice them to what is unnecessary. Jesus said, "Man shall not live by bread alone." You should therefore learn how to combine the cares needful for your body and your spirit. Both can be attended to at once without injury, if you act wisely.

Mary's first thought was to profit by the teachings of Jesus. When you experience two pressing desires, do you not yield to the strongest ? But you should not be exclusive, either in the one case or the other. "Mary," said Jesus, "has chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from her," because spiritual nourishment is never lost. It is a plant whose roots are always spreading. Mary, like all others, regarded Jesus as clothed with a material human body, like yours ; but he appeared to her to have no special tastes or requirements, and contented himself with little. What need was there then for her to trouble about material cares ? You know that Jesus only took food (and even then in appearance, and not in reality) when he had a lesson to give, or an example to set.

MATTHEW, CHAP. XXII.—VERSES 41-46. MARK,
CHAP. XII.—VERSES 35-37. LUKE, CHAP. XX.
VERSES 41-44.

Christ and David.

Matth. xxii. (41) And the Pharisees being assembled, Jesus asked them, saying, (42) What think ye of Christ? Whose son is he? They say to him, The son of David. (43) He says to them, Why then does David in spirit call him Lord, saying, (44) The Lord said to my Lord, Sit on my right hand, while I make thine enemies the footstool of thy feet. (45) If David therefore calls him Lord, how is he his son? (46) And no one was able to answer him the saying, nor dared any one from that day question him any more.

Mark xii. (35) And Jesus answered and said, teaching in the Temple, How say the Scribes that Christ is the Son of David? (36) For David himself said, in the Holy Spirit, The Lord said to my Lord, Sit on my right hand while I make thine enemies the footstool of thy feet. (37) Therefore David himself calls him Lord; and how is he his son? And the great multitude heard him gladly.

Luke xx. (41) And he said to them, How say they that Christ is the son of David? (42) But David himself says in the book of Psalms, The Lord said to my Lord, Sit on my right hand. (43) While I make thy enemies the footstool of thy feet. (44) David therefore calls him Lord, and how is he his son?

§ 261. This observation was designed by Jesus to teach men that he was not united to David by fleshly ties, and was therefore not his descendant; and that he was superior to humanity. Secondly, he expressed the vast difference which existed between the spirit of David, and that of the Christ of God. Whatever was the humility, gentleness, and self-renunciation of Jesus, you must not forget his origin. He is your Lord, and ours, and is the Son of God, although not from the point of view in which you Christians have regarded him, as being God himself, but one of his creatures, the son of the Most High, and the brother of men, like every created spirit; though himself a spirit of perfect and immaculate purity.* The question which Jesus put to the Pharisees, and which no one was able to answer, was only intended to be fully answered by the New Revelation, which could alone reveal the true nature and origin of Christ. The allegorical expressions of the

* Compare §§ 35 and 36, vol. i. pp. 104-123.

Psalm apply, under a veil, to the mission of Jesus, who sits on the right hand of God, in regard to your planet, being intrusted with the purification and transformation of the planet and its humanity.

MATTHEW, CHAP. XXIII.—VERSES 1-7. MARK,
CHAP. XII.—VERSES 38-40. LUKE, CHAP. XX.
VERSES 45-47.

Scribes and Pharisees.

Matth. xxiii. (1) Then Jesus spoke to the multitudes and to his disciples, saying, (2) The Scribes and Pharisees sit on the seat of Moses. (3) Therefore all things which they tell you to observe, observe and do; but do not perform their works, for they speak, and do not act. (4) For they bind heavy burdens, and difficult to be borne, and lay them on the shoulders of men, but they will not move them with their finger. (5) And they do all their works to be seen of men, and they widen their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments. (6) And they love the first seats at feasts, and in the synagogues, (7) And greetings in the market-places, and to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi.

Mark xii. (38) And he said to them in his teaching, Beware of the Scribes, who desire to walk about in robes. (39) And love greetings in the market-places, and the first seats in the synagogues, and at feasts. (40) They devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayers; these shall receive still severer condemnation.

Luke xx. (45) And while all the people were listening, he said to his disciples, (46) Beware of the Scribes, who like to walk about in robes, and love greetings in the market-places, and the first seats in the synagogues and at feasts. (47) Who devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayers; these shall receive still severer condemnation.

§ 262. In all ages men have lived who have preached and taught a morality to others which they have not practised themselves. The seed which they thus sow may fall upon good ground, and yield fruit; but it is frequently lost, because teaching is the best example. Can your disciple complain of the severity of morals which you impose upon him, if he sees that you conform to them yourself? Will he not comprehend indulgence for others, if you are indulgent towards him? Will he not be more ready to be charitable, if you show him that you yourself practise charity? Will he not love his brethren, if you show your love for him? Let not the man who preaches but does not practise be discouraged, but let him apply his own words to himself, and

he will teach what he preaches by example. He will then lead the multitude more easily, for nothing is so eloquent as example. Do not imitate the proud Scribes and Pharisees. Lighten your brothers' burdens by yourselves showing them how to bear them lightly.

If Christianity, and especially Catholicism, have not yielded the fruits which they ought, is it not because the leaders of the Church have preached and taught without performing, like the Scribes and Pharisees of whom Jesus spoke?

Yes, certainly, for it is easier to speak than to act.

MATTHEW, CHAP. XXIII.—VERSES 8—12.

God alone is the Father, and Christ alone is the Teacher.

(8) But be ye not called Rabbi, for one is your Teacher, Christ, and you are all brethren. (9) And be ye not called Father on earth, for one is your Father, the Father in the heavens. (10) Nor be ye called Teachers, for one is your Teacher, Christ. (11) He that is greatest among you, let him be your minister, (12) And whoever shall exalt himself shall be humbled, and whoever shall humble himself shall be exalted.

§ 263. The lesson given by Jesus to his disciples and to all men may be summed up in humility and fraternity. Jesus forbade, then and for ever afterwards, that such terms should be applied to any man as Father, which belongs to God only; and Teacher, which belongs only to Christ as the ruler and protector of your planet. Nothing but Pharisaical pride could lead men to claim these titles at any time.

Do not give way to pride, nor seek to raise yourselves above your brethren by making them feel your superiority. Never flatter those whom you believe to be superior to yourselves, for this would lead to pride and disastrous consequences to you, if you exalt yourselves, and to them, if you raise them above their proper station. Never abase or humble yourselves before your fellow-men; for praise and admiration are due to God alone. Give justice with sincerity to whomsoever it is due; but never yield to any feeling of servility, for your pride would revolt against it in the depths of your own heart, and you would awaken pride in your brother's heart. Never forget that he who

thinks too much of himself is contemptible; but all incarnate spirits are liable to fall into this error unawares, and it leads to contempt for others, as well as pride. This contempt is often disguised under the appearance of affability, condescension, and protection; but it is, nevertheless, contempt; and thus recoils on themselves. If you search your conscience, you will there find the leaven of pride which we would destroy. A just appreciation of one's own merits is so difficult that none of you can pretend to it; and you should no longer believe yourselves to be more devout, charitable, upright, learned, or clever, than others, or even than the bulk of the people; for if you surpass them in one respect, you may be inferior to them in many others. A just appreciation of himself will always teach the wise man that he has much to do to destroy evil, cultivate good, and seek for improvement. Never forget that whoever exalts himself is near a fall; and never tempt your neighbour by rousing in his breast the feeling of pride, which might destroy him. Be just, but never flatter anybody.

“Let him who would be greatest among you, be as your servant.” If his pride gains the upper hand, he will be your servant when his experiences begin afresh, and he will be forced to humiliate himself; “for whoever exalts himself shall be humbled, and whoever humbles himself shall be exalted.” He who tries to raise himself above others, and to make his superiority felt, is always urged by pride; and in the day of retribution he will be obliged to expiate his fault, just as humility of the heart (not of the lips) must also receive its reward.

MATTHEW, CHAP. XXIII.—VERSES 13-22.

Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites.

(13) Woe to you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, for you devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayers, therefore you shall receive much greater condemnation. (14) Woe to you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, for you shut up the kingdom of the heavens before men; you do not enter yourselves, and you hinder those who are about to enter. (15) Woe to you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites,

for you traverse sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, you make him two-fold more the son of Gehenna than yourselves. (16) Woe to you, blind guides, who say, Whoever shall swear by the shrine, it is nothing, but whoever shall swear by the gold of the shrine, he is bound. (17) Fools and blind ; for which is greater, the gold, or the shrine which hallows the gold ? (18) And whoever shall swear by the altar, it is nothing, but whoever shall swear by the gift upon it, he is bound. (19) Fools and blind ; for which is greater, the gift, or the altar which sanctifies the gift ? (20) Therefore, whoever swears by the altar swears by it, and by everything upon it. (21) And whoever swears by the shrine, swears by it, and by him who dwelleth therein. (22) And he who swears by heaven, swears by the throne of God, and by him who sitteth thereon.

§ 264. Woe to those who depart from the way traced out by the Just One, and turn aside those who are striving to follow it, to drag them into the errors which they propagate ! Woe to those who shelter themselves behind a faith which they do not feel, to abuse the credulity of men, and employ it to serve their own ends ! Woe to those who, under the appearance of faith, draw into their ways those who would have held themselves aloof, and cause them to fall into their own errors ! Woe, woe to the impostors and hypocrites who make a trade of their prayers, and sell the blessings of the Lord, and admission to the divine abode ! Woe to them, for they shall see the deceit and wickedness of their ways ; and remorse and expiation will bow their proud heads, and bend their stubborn knees ! Blind leaders of the blind who entangle men in an inextricable net of guilty trifles ! You know, leaders of Israel, who lead the Shepherd's sheep, that the lying and arbitrary laws which you yourselves frame, are heavy chains which clog the steps of those whom you ought to help forward ; and you, blind ones, who have only to open your eyes to behold the light, why do you bow beneath a yoke which your reason rejects ?

Swear not, O feeble race, neither by the altar, nor by the temple, nor by heaven ; never dare to swear, for you are too weak to keep your vows ; but let your words be brief and simple, Yea, yea, Nay, nay. Genuine sentiments need no strong expressions ; and simplicity is the companion of truth. Never swear ; and neither take an oath yourselves, nor require it from your brethren, for how do you know that

they will be able to keep it? Be simple in word and act, and let your bond towards men be the same as towards God ; purity of the heart.

MATTHEW, CHAP. XXIII.—VERSES 23-39. LUKE,
CHAP. XI.—VERSES 37-54. LUKE, CHAP. XIII.

VERSES 31-35.

Hypocritical Teachers.

Matth. xxiii. (23) Woe to you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, for you pay tithes of mint and anise and cummin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law, justice and mercy and faith ; these things ye ought to have done, and not neglected the others. (24) Blind guides, who strain out the gnat, and gulp down the camel ! (25) Woe to you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, for ye cleanse the outside of the cup and the dish, and within they are filled with extortion and injustice. (16) Blind Pharisee, cleanse first the inside of the cup and the dish, that their outside may be clean also. (27) Woe to you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, for ye resemble whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outwardly, but within they are filled with the bones of the dead, and with all impurity. (28) Thus also you appear righteous to men outwardly, but within, you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness. (29) Woe to you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, for you build the tombs of the prophets, and adorn the monuments of the righteous ; (30) And you say, If we had lived in the days of our fathers, we would not have shared with them in the blood of the prophets. (31) So that you bear witness to yourselves that you are sons of those who killed the prophets. (32) And you have filled up the measure of your fathers. (33) Serpents, offspring of vipers, how can you fly from the judgment of Gehenna ? (34) Therefore behold I send you prophets and wise men and scribes, and some of them you shall kill and crucify, and some of them you shall scourge in your synagogues, and drive them from city to city. (35) That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon earth, from the blood of righteous Abel, to the blood of Zacharias the son of Barachias, whom you slew between the shrine and the altar. (36) Verily I say to you, All these things shall come upon this generation. (37) Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who killest the prophets, and stonest them who are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings. and ye would not ! (38) Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. (39) For I say unto you, You shall not see me from this time, until you shall say, Blessed is he who cometh in the name of the Lord.

Luke xi. (37) And while he was speaking, a certain Pharisee asked him to breakfast at his house. (38) And he went in, and sat down. And when the Pharisee saw it, he wondered that he had not first washed before breakfast. (39) And the Lord said to him, Now you Pharisees cleanse the outside of the cup and the table, but within you are full of extortion and wickedness. (40) Fools, does not he who made the outside, make the inside also ? (41) But give alms of your possessions, and behold all things shall be clean unto you. (42) But woe to you, Pharisees, for you pay tithes of mint and rue and every kind

of herb, and pass by the judgment and the love of God ; these things ought you to do, and not leave those undone. (43) Woe unto you, Pharisees, for you love the first seats in the synagogues, and greetings in the market-places, (44) Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, for you are like unseen graves, and the men who walk over them do not see them. (45) And a certain lawyer answered and said to him, Teacher, in saying these things, you insult us also. (46) And he said, And woe to you, lawyers, for you load men with burdens grievous to be borne, and you yourselves touch not the burdens with one of your fingers. (47) Woe unto you, for you build the tombs of the prophets, and your fathers slew them. (48) Truly you bear witness to and approve of your father's deeds, for they indeed killed them, and you build their tombs. (49) Therefore, also, the wisdom of God said, I will send among them prophets and apostles, and some of them they shall kill and banish, (50) That the blood of all the prophets, which has been shed from the foundation of the world may be required of this generation. (51) From the blood of Abel to the blood of Zacharias, who perished between the shrine and the altar ; verily I say unto you, it shall be required of this generation. (52) Woe unto you, lawyers, for you have taken away the key of the Gnosis ; you enter not in yourselves, and those who were entering in, you hindered. (53) And while he was saying these things to them, the Scribes and Pharisees began to urge him vehemently, (54) Lying in wait for him, and seeking to catch something out of his mouth, that they might denounce him.

Luke xiii. (31) On that day certain Pharisees came to him, saying to him, Go forth and depart hence, for Herod desires to kill thee. (32) And he said to them, Go and tell that fox, Behold I cast out demons, and I work cures to-day and to-morrow, and on the third day I will bring them to an end. (33) Besides, I must journey to-day and to-morrow, and the next day, for it is impossible for a prophet to perish out of Jerusalem. (34) Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who killest the prophets, and stonest those who are sent to thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together as a hen her brood under her wings, and ye would not ! (35) Behold your house is left unto you desert ; and verily I say unto you, You shall not see me until you shall say, Blessed is he who cometh in the name of the Lord.

§ 265. (Matth. xxiii. 23 ; Luke xi. 42.)—Weigh well the import of these words of Jesus, you who sell prayers, and you who buy them ; and who make gifts to churches and convents, thinking thus to redeem your faults, and to bribe the justice of God. Weigh well these words, for you are hypocrites, like the Scribes and Pharisees. You confine yourselves to outward actions ; you bow before your altars with outward humility, while your hearts are filled with bitterness, pride, and envy. You trust in the number of prayers that you have murmured while your thoughts were elsewhere ; and in the number of your genuflexions, and the amount of alms which you have cast into the treasury, with-

out reflecting that all these things are worthless as compared with the least change in the heart.

Do not bow so often in your temples, but stoop sometimes to raise the unhappy who have fallen ; do not kneel so often on the floor of your temples, but lift your hearts to the Lord, with more faith, gratitude, and love. Do not throw the offering “ of the useless plants of your garden ” into the treasury of the Temple with so much ostentation ; but deprive yourselves more often (in secret) of offerings for the widow, the orphan, and the poor.

But do not neglect the duties imposed upon you by your religion, for until you have become sufficiently purified to be the worshippers of the Father in spirit and in truth, you require a curb. Let the fulfilment of your duties be homage, sincerely rendered to the Great Being who governs the universe ; and not the monotonous and regular action of a machine. Therefore, do not confine yourselves to the outward observances of your religion, to the neglect of sincere worship, and charity of heart and action, which constitute in practice the love of God, through justice, mercy, and faith.

(Matth. xxiii. 24-28 ; Luke xi. 38-52.)—These words are still applicable to your own days. Woe to those who confine themselves to the outward observances of the Law, without practising the virtues which they preach to others. Woe to them, for they condemn themselves, and their own mouth accuses them before the Lord. Woe to those who make themselves a covering of false works, which are only apparently good, but have no other object but to impose on men, and thus hide the iniquities of their conscience, and attract those whom they deceive by these outward appearances. Woe to those who know where truth is to be found, and turn aside their brethren lest it should be known, and their iniquities discovered. Woe to those who know where the light is, and keep it in the shade, lest their brethren should behold the deformities of their soul ! Woe to those who are possessed of the key of knowledge, and who do not enter themselves, but close the door against

those who would enter ; for those who know the truth ought to live according to its teachings. They have the key, but do not enter upon the path that opens before them, and they turn aside those whom they ought to lead, and are thus doubly guilty. Woe to those who know the truth, but who veil or disguise it, that they may lead men more easily into the dark paths in which they themselves walk ! They are apparently scrupulous for their consciences, and those of their disciples, but their inward unworthiness compels them to act thus. They are incapable of following the path, and turn aside those who would walk in it, saying, "Follow us, for we alone know the safest path, and whoever does not follow us is lost." O woe to them, for they are blind leaders of the blind, and will have to give an account of all the sheep whom they have lost, and of all those whom they have hindered from saving themselves ! Woe to those who hide the light, for its lustre will blind them ! Woe to the hypocrites, deceivers, and liars who teach as truths what they know to be false, opening the paths of error, but not following them themselves, because they do not believe in their hearts the principles which they impose on others ; for they condemn themselves before the Lord. They load the shoulders of their brethren with a heavy burden, and will not support the least portion. They may lie to men, but they cannot lie to the Lord, who will require a severe account of their actions, from the beginning of the ages, and the beginning of their iniquities.

(Matth. xxiii. 29-39 ; Luke xi. 47-51 ; xiii. 31-35.)—Jesus here alludes to the persecution and death of the prophets ; to his own approaching crucifixion, and to the martyrdom and persecutions of the Apostles, disciples, and early Christians. He also alludes to his efforts to gather the sheep into the fold of the Good Shepherd ; to the destruction of Jerusalem, the dispersion of the Jews, and finally to the period described allegorically as the end of the world ; that is, the period when the regeneration will be effected by the purification and transformation of your planet and its humanity, and when your Ruler and Master will come in his glory ; and the regenerate race of men

(both Jews and Gentiles) will cry with one voice, "Blessed is he who cometh in the name of the Lord!"

(Matth. xxiii. 35, 36; Luke, xi. 50, 51).—These words contain a hidden reference to reincarnation. God is too just to punish the descendants for the faults of their ancestors, which they have not shared; but those who had slain the prophets were still in the presence of Jesus, and eager to shed his blood. Consequently, they would have to give an account of all the blood which they had shed already, and of all the blood which they were still to shed. These were mysteries of reincarnation, the only key which could penetrate to the sense of the words of Jesus, and reconcile the justice of the Lord with his mercy. You will always find the teachings of Jesus pervaded by this thought, ready to be revealed when the time should come.

The blood shed by the Hebrews was always flowing, for it thus returned by reincarnation upon the heads of their descendants according to the flesh, who had shed it during their previous existences, until they had been purified in the fire. This expression is an emblem, for fire purifies everything. Fire was regarded as the principle of purification, and the agent destined to raise to the Eternal the perfumes of incense, and the odour of sacrifices. It is on this account that fire is continually spoken of as purifying sinners; the moral fire of remorse and expiation, which leads the guilty spirit to repentance, and the desire of reparation; and then to purification by reparation and progress.

MARK, CHAP. XII.—VERSES 41-44. LUKE,
CHAP. XXI.—VERSES 1-4.

The Widow's Mite.

Mark xii. (41) And as Jesus was sitting opposite the treasury, he saw all the multitude casting money into the treasury. (42) And many rich men cast in much, and one poor widow came, and cast in two farthings, which make a halfpenny. (43) And having called his disciples, he saith unto them, Verily I say unto you that this poor widow hath cast in more than all they who have cast into the treasury. (44) For they all cast in from their abundance, but she from her poverty cast in as much as she had, even all her living.

Luke xxi. (1) And looking up, he saw the rich men casting their gifts into the treasury. (2) And he saw also a certain poor widow casting in two mites. (3) And he said, In truth I say to you that this poor widow hath cast in more than they all. (4) For all these cast into the offerings of God from their abundance, but she from her poverty hath cast in all the living which she had.

§ 266. These verses require no comment. The lesson which Jesus thus gave men is easily understood. All charity is meritorious, when it is disinterested, and unaccompanied by pride or ostentation; but he who deprives himself of what is necessary for himself, to give to him who wants it, gives more than the rich man who gives of his abundance without depriving himself of anything, and is further advanced than the other in heartfelt charity. Thus the farthings of the poor widow are worth more in the eyes of God than the gold of the rich.

MATTHEW, CHAP. XXIV.—VERSES 1-14. MARK,
CHAP. XIII.—VERSES 1-13. LUKE, CHAP. XXI.

VERSES 5-19.

End of the Age.

Matth. xxiv. (1) And Jesus coming out, departed from the Temple, and his disciples came to show him the buildings of the Temple. (2) And Jesus said to them, Do you not see all these things? Verily I say unto you that there shall not be left here stone upon stone which shall not be thrown down. (3) And while he was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately, saying, Tell us when shall these things be, and what shall be the signs of thy coming, and of the end of the age? (4) And Jesus answered and said to them, Beware lest anyone shall deceive you. (5) For many shall come in my name, saying, I am the Christ; and shall deceive many. (6) And you will be likely to hear of wars and rumours of wars; see that ye be not frightened, for all these things must be; but the end is not yet. (7) For nation shall rise up against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there shall be famines and plagues and earthquakes in divers places. (8) And all these things are the beginning of travails.* (9) Then shall they give you over to affliction, and kill you, and you shall be hated among all nations through my name. (10) And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and hate one another. (11) And many false prophets shall arise, and shall deceive many. (12) And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall grow cold. (13) But whosoever shall endure unto the end, this man shall be

* I choose the primary meaning here, as it is peculiarly appropriate to the interpretation given below.—TRANSL.

saved. (14) And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole civilized world, for a testimony to all nations ; and then shall the end come.

Mark xiii. (1) And as he was leaving the Temple, one of his disciples says to him, Teacher, see what great stones and what great buildings ! (2) And Jesus answered and said to him, Dost thou look at these great buildings ? there shall not remain stone upon stone which shall not be thrown down. (3) And while he was sitting on the Mount of Olives, opposite the Temple, Peter and James and John and Andrew asked him privately, (4) Tell us when shall these things be, and what shall the sign be when all these things are about to be accomplished ? (5) And Jesus answered them, and began to say, Beware lest any man shall deceive you. (6) For many shall come in my name, saying, I am he ; and they shall deceive many. (7) And when you shall hear of wars and rumours of wars, be not frightened, for thus it must be ; but the end is not yet. (8) For nation shall rise up against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there shall be earthquakes in divers places, and there shall be famines and tumults ; these things are the beginnings of travails. (9) But look to yourselves, for they will deliver you up to councils, and to synagogues ; you shall be beaten, and shall be brought before rulers and kings for a testimony to them. (10) And the Gospel must first be preached among all nations. (11) And when they shall lead you to deliver you up, do not reflect beforehand what you shall say, nor take thought about it, but whatever shall be given to you in that hour, this you shall speak ; for it is not ye who speak, but the Holy Spirit. (12) And the brother shall deliver up the brother to death, and the father the child, and children shall rise up against their parents, and shall put them to death. (13) And you shall be hated by all through my name : but he who shall abide to the end, this man shall be saved.

Luke xxi. (5) And as some were speaking of the Temple, how it was adorned with fine stones and offerings, he said, (6) As for these things which you behold, the days shall come in which there shall not be left stone upon stone which shall not be thrown down. (7) And they asked him, saying, Teacher, when shall these things be ? And what shall be the sign when these things are about to come to pass ? (8) And he said, Beware that you are not deceived, for many shall come in my name, saying, I am he, and the time is at hand ; do not follow after them. (9) And when you shall hear of wars and tumults, be not alarmed, for these things must first be, but the end is not immediately. (10) Then he said to them, Nation shall rise up against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, (11) And there shall be great earthquakes in divers places, and famines and pestilences, and there shall be great and fearful signs from heaven. (12) But before all these things, they shall lay their hands upon you and persecute you, delivering you up to synagogues and prisons, bringing you before kings and rulers on account of my name. (13) And it shall end in a testimony to you. (14) Therefore fix it in your hearts not to premeditate what you shall answer. (15) For I will give you speech and wisdom which all your adversaries shall not be able to answer or confute. (16) And you shall be betrayed by parents and brethren and relatives, and friends, and some of you shall be put to death. (17) And you shall be hated by all men through my name. (18) But not a hair of your heads shall be destroyed. (19) In steadfastness you shall possess your lives.

§ 267. (Matth. xxiv. 1-3 ; Mark xiii. 1-4 ; Luke xxi. 5-7.)
 —The answer of Jesus was designed to keep nations always on their guard by portraying the events which must take place in the ordinary course of ages. His words were not addressed specially to the disciples, but rather to succeeding generations ; and while they represented these events as leading to the end of the planet, they alluded spiritually to the destinies of your earth and its humanity, and to the appearance of Jesus on your purified earth. Everything was appropriate to the time, and to the needs of the age. This is also the case in the present epoch. The truth is contained in what you are told, but in certain cases it is not fully developed. All is not revealed to you, because you are not yet ripe to receive it. Revelations are always in accordance with the needs of the immediate present, and are preparatory to the future. Man rejects this idea, because his pride leads him to imagine that he is prepared to understand everything, and strong enough to bear everything. He does not like to admit that he has only just emerged from infancy, and that it is only little by little that the veil can be gradually raised to show him the truth.

(Matth. xxiv. 4-5 ; Mark xiii. 5-6 ; Luke xxi. 8.)—These words are allegorical, and related both to the present and the future. They apply to your own days, and to those which will follow. They allude to those who undertake to lead nations in the paths of the Lord, but who direct them into wrong courses. Let men take courage. He who was sent to them, and who manifested himself under a corporeal human appearance, has not left them, and no one can say, "I am he who accomplished the great sacrifice for you."

There will be, and already have been, Christs. The word is here used allegorically, and applies to spirits sent to your planet on a relatively superior mission. Such were all who have conduced to the progress of humanity, from the most distant ages. They have raised themselves above the masses whom they have ruled, by their virtues, knowledge, and genius ; and however ungrateful men have been towards

them, they were nevertheless missionary spirits always relatively superior to those among whom their incarnation took place. There will be more Christs, and when they come, they will be gifted with large powers and great authority ; but they will not proclaim themselves to be the Messiah, the Christ of God, your Protector, Ruler, and Master. You may know them by their following the example of the Master, in practising humility, self-renunciation, devotion, charity, and love ; and when they attain to eminence, they will preach universal brotherhood and friendship by their example, and will open the paths of physical, moral, and intellectual progress to your humanity.

In speaking of false Christs, Jesus alluded to all those who should profess to hold full powers from the Lord, but yet should turn aside the servants of God from the right path. Despise those hypocritical Christs and false prophets who make lying laws, and turn men aside from spiritual religion to plunge them into the abuses of matter, and who desire to uphold the dominion of the letter which killeth, and reject the advent of the Spirit which giveth life. From all such turn aside, for they lead men in the way of perdition ; a road which has no exit, and which compels you constantly to start afresh until you have found the safe and sure path which leads into the courts of the eternal temple, which cannot be destroyed.

(Matth. xxiv. 6-8 ; Mark xiii. 7, 8 ; Luke xxi. 9-11.)—Have not the wars, plagues, and famines of which Jesus spoke come to pass, and do they not still continue ? The fearful sights refer to the abominations of which men were guilty both at that period, and afterwards. Does not history furnish you with many examples ?* The great signs in heaven do not refer to anything material. This is a false interpretation, which has led the revolutions of planets to be regarded as signs of the end of the world. The signs which will be seen in heaven are the influences under which you are living at present ; and which serve to develop the reason

* These words were medianimically dictated in August, 1863.

and the free will, and to enable the spirit better to discern the future.

Such is the general explanation, but do not imagine that there are no material signs in heaven, either physical, or resulting from medianimic causes. Jesus foretold the fall of Jerusalem, and history tells you that a comet, having the appearance of a sword, hung over Jerusalem for a whole year; and before sunrise, chariots full of armed men were seen in the air, or in the clouds, throughout the whole country.* You know that comets always present a somewhat similar appearance, and seem to end in a point. The shape of this comet led to its being supposed to have the figure of a sword. Comets are common; and there are always some which are more or less visible to you. The appearance of chariots of armed men in the clouds was a spirit-manifestation, witnessed by those who had medianimic faculties. These manifestations were designed to impress the incarnate spirits, and arrest their attention. Medianimic phenomena still take place among you.

Have not these things happened, and do they not still happen? Are they not necessary on account of the physical inferiority of your world, and the physical, moral, and intellectual inferiority of your humanity? Are they not still necessary, that the end may come according to the immutable laws of progress, by the accomplishment of the development, purification, and transformation, both from a planetary and human point of view, of everything which exists upon your globe? For everything proceeds from the infinitely little to the infinitely great.

(Matth. xxiv. 9-13; Mark xiii. 9-13; Luke xxi. 12-17.)—All these words are allegorical, so far as they do not apply personally and exclusively to the Apostles. Did not Jesus tell them that they should witness his advent, and the end of the age, and that that generation should not pass away till all these things should be fulfilled? You can see the ruling idea of reincarnation running through these words of Jesus.

* Josephus, Jewish War, vi. 3:

His words shall not pass away, and the generation of spirits to whom they were addressed will witness their accomplishment. When Jesus approached the end of his earthly mission, he repeated the directions and announcements which he had given to the Apostles at the beginning; and you may refer to previous explanations (§ 139, vol. i. pp. 327-331).

Jesus alluded to the persecutions which those would have to endure who departed from the false paths which had been prescribed for them. Have you not witnessed the persecution of all who perceived that truth was different to what it was represented, and who endeavoured to discover it? Material persecutions, though extinct among you, still survive in many countries;* and are ready to revive even among the most civilized nations. The opportunity alone is wanting, but the slightest pretext will awaken the slumbering passions. We do not predict religious wars, like those of former times; but private revenge and secret persecutions, by those who feel their authority shaken, and attack all whom they suspect of wishing to oppose them.

(Matth. xxiv. 11, 12.)—Jesus alludes to those teachers of the Law who would pervert his teachings, and falsify his words to give them an interpretation contrary to the law of God, but more in accordance with their own desires, personal interests, and ambition. The majority have turned aside from the right path, to follow these false prophets, and the few who desired to remain in the paths of love and charity have been and still are rejected by them and their disciples who are entangled in the bonds which they impose upon them.

(Luke xxi. 18.)—"Not a hair of your head shall perish," because whatever be the fate of matter, the spirit will emerge victorious.

(Luke xxi. 19.)—You will become masters of yourselves by your patience, and you will commit no act, and speak no word, which will be injurious to the advancement of your spirit.

* Medianimically dictated in August, 1863.

(Matth. xxiv. 14 ; Mark xiii. 10.)—The truths which Jesus taught must spread. Faith in God, love and charity must bind the whole world together.

You are far indeed from the time foretold by Jesus ; nevertheless, Spiritism has come to hasten it, by leading all men whomsoever, and whatever their religion, to receive the good news, to hear it with joy, and to preach the Gospel of peace and love.

“Then shall the end come;” for all men will sincerely practise the law of love, and eagerly work together for the progress of each and all. The spirit will free itself more readily from matter, and matter itself will change its nature, according to the ascending course of the spirit.

MATTHEW, CHAP. XXIV.—VERSES 15–22. MARK, CHAP. XIII.—VERSES 14–20. LUKE, CHAP. XXI.

VERSES 20–24.

Transformation of the Earth.

Matth. xxiv. (15) Therefore when you shall see the abomination of desolation, which was spoken of by Daniel the Prophet, standing in the Holy Place (let him who discerneth, know). (16) Then let those in Judæa flee to the mountains. (17) Let not him who is on his housetop go down to fetch anything out of his house. (18) And let not him who is in the field turn back to fetch his clothes. (19) But woe to those who are with child, and to those who give suck in those days ! (20) But pray that your flight be not in the winter, nor on the Sabbath. (21) For then shall be great affliction, such as was not from the beginning of the world till now, no, nor shall be. (22) And if those days were not shortened, there should no flesh be saved ; but on account of the elect, those days shall be shortened.

Mark xiii. (14) And when you shall see the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing where it ought not (let him who discerneth, know), then let those in Judæa flee to the mountains. (15) And let not him who is on his housetop go down into the house, nor enter to take anything out of his house. (16) And let not him who is in the field turn back to fetch his garment. (17) But woe to those who are with child, and to those who give suck in those days ! (18) But pray that your flight be not in the winter. (19) For in those days shall be distress so great that there was none such from the beginning of the Creation, which God created until now, neither shall be. (20) And unless God should have shortened the days, no flesh would be saved, but on account of the elect whom he hath chosen, he hath shortened the days.

Luke xxi. (20) And when ye shall see Jerusalem encompassed with armies, then shall you know that her desolation is at hand. (21) Then let those in Judæa flee to the mountains, and let those who are in the midst of her depart out of her, and let those in the country districts not enter into her. (22) For these are the days of vengeance, when all

things that have been written shall be fulfilled. (23) But woe to those who are with child, and to those who give suck in those days! For there shall be great suffering in the land, and wrath upon this people. (24) And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive among all nations, and Jerusalem shall be trodden down by the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles shall be fulfilled.

§ 268. The words of Jesus recorded by Matthew and Mark have been understood literally, and not according to the spiritual sense, which relates both to the vices which mankind must abandon, and to the physical convulsions through which your earth must pass, in correspondence with the moral and physical purification of your humanity. It is true that the time is approaching, for the abomination of desolation (whoso perceiveth, let him understand) is standing where it ought not, and is widely diffused among men. Vices hide in the shade of the temple; luxury, avarice, envy, pride, and ostentation, have taken possession of hearts that ought to be ruled only by the love of God and the neighbour.

Woe to those who are with child, and to those who give suck, for young children are entrusted to these faithless guides who profane their young minds, and rear them in iniquity! Woe to you, for the winter is at hand, when your sufferings will be increased. Pray to the Lord that it may be deferred until you can clothe yourselves. Do not stop on the road, nor wander from it, nor make any provisions regarding matter; fulfil your work where the Lord has placed you, and do not look back, but hasten to finish your task, that it may be completed when the appointed time has come.

You were formerly buried in darkness, and few among you could have escaped if the Lord had not sent you light. Strive to be among the just who shall be saved; that is, those who will not be cast down to the inferior worlds, but will be admitted to follow the ascending course of the spirit on your regenerated planet.

Prepare beforehand the robe of charity and love which will preserve you from the severity of the cold, and then you need not fear being surprised by the winter. Hasten to complete your work, whatever it may be, where you have begun it, that it may be finished when the voice of the Lord

shall call on you to give an account. Take courage, for the days of trouble have been shortened ; the Lord has sent you light to enlighten your path, and balm to heal your wounds.

(Matth. xxiv. 16-18 ; Mark xiii. 14-16.)—These words relate to the successive physical convulsions which your planet must experience before entering on a new phase. They refer to the earthquakes which will take place in some parts of your globe. Those who will be surprised by this calamity will have neither time nor possibility of escape ; and it would be useless for them to attempt it.

(Matth. xxiv. 19-21 ; Mark xiii. 17-20.)—Pray that these events may not overtake you without your being spiritually on your guard, and prepared to meet the calamities which must inevitably accompany the renewal of a planet. Cold will follow heat, and winter will spread over nature. The fire will consume what has not been destroyed by the ice. The transformation of your planet in passing from a material condition to the fluidic state will no more be accomplished instantaneously than your own individual and personal transformation. For this end, the nature of the elements of which you are composed must be partially changed, and in order not to disturb the equilibrium, the whole mass must be displaced, and gradually changed in direction, especially the atmosphere, that it may find a suitable medium for its equilibrium. Your sphere will remove from its centre of gravity in consequence of its displacement, and pass gradually on to the station which it must occupy after your transformation.*

The planetary renovation, and that of the kingdoms of nature, and of your humanity will take place gradually in a progressive and continuous manner. Will you not perceive it in the annual revolutions of your globe, and the planetary crises which will prepare for its progress and

* Thus, according to the veiled Revelation given to John (Rev. v. 11). "The heavens and the earth fled away," progressively "and there was no place found for them," when the ascent of the planet into the superior regions, and then into the regions of pure fluids shall be completely finished. What will take place in consequence of the displacement and ascension of the planet, is indicated, also under a veil, by the words of Jesus recorded in the Gospels.

transformation, and by the distance which you traverse, which will remove you from the centre from whence you derive warmth and life? While your globe is removing from its present centre, the cold will make itself felt at all the points which are least exposed to the sun. The snows will extend, and the inward fermentation of the earth will lead to explosions which will expel the primordial substances, and scatter them in space. This will give the earth the density suited to the new position which it is to occupy. It would be necessary to invent new terms for these primordial substances, to express the events to come; but you might call them lava, bitumen, asphalt, or volcanic substances, in order to understand what must take place at a fixed period.

Men will then be more purified and elevated, and will, for the most part, not experience the same requirements, for these will vary like the atmosphere; and men will then fly to the points of the earth which still remain habitable, and those less advanced will vainly seek for an asylum, which they can only find in moral progress. But will there not always be different degrees of advancement? Can the necessities of the most advanced be the same as those of the inferior? Imperfect as you still are, are there not nations even now which are gradually dying out? This is because human civilization is extending like a net, and is ready to enclose them; again, moral progress will pass from nation to nation, always pressing on the more refractory, until they have joined in the general current. You can clearly understand that even when you have attained the degree of planetary advancement which is promised to you, there will always be different degrees of intelligence, and of perfection. Those only who obstinately refuse to improve will be excluded until they have made full atonement by the expiation, reparation, and progress which is necessary before they can be re-admitted.

But do not forget that these events will not be the work of one day, but of ages, and that the human races which have changed since the formation of your world must change again, for all is harmony in nature. Compare the men

among you with those of some parts of the earth which seem to you to be disinherited. Compare those unhappy races who are more like apes than men, with the account which has been given you of the fallen incarnate spirit, when he is cast upon a world of trials for the first time;* and follow all the phases through which he must have passed, and you will then be able to form some idea of those through which he has yet to pass.

The words of Jesus, "Woe to those who are with child and to those who give suck in those days," had no other object, as regards the physical convulsions, which are the inevitable accompaniments of a planetary renewal, than to express the greatness of those calamities which should spare neither the suckling nor the unborn child, and should overtake mothers in their dearest hopes.

"Pray that your flight be not in the winter, nor on the Sabbath." The Sabbath is a day of rest, and the winter is a time of severity. These words were designed to lead men to pray to the Lord that they might not be surprised in idleness and improvidence, but might be always ready when the day of reckoning should come; and thus escape suffering and expiation. The distress of these days is said to be greater than it ever was before, or will be afterwards. You can understand this in reference to the catastrophes necessarily attending the purification and transformation of the world. The transformations which your globe has already suffered were only designed to improve the matter of which it was composed, but those which must take place in future ages will gradually transform this matter itself into fluidic substances appropriate to your new bodies. The distress of that time will be greater than at any previous age, both as regards the nature and character of the physical convulsions, and as regards their consequences to the spirits who have remained obstinately rebellious to progress, or backward, and who will be removed from your earth at the time of its purification and transformation, and cast down to the

* Compare vol. i. pp. 127 and 128.

inferior planets. But remember that the Lord will never deprive any of his children, however insignificant or guilty, of the power and opportunity of doing better ; and although the exiles will then cease to reincarnate themselves on your world, their successive reincarnations will nevertheless run their course, but amid other surroundings, until the guilty have amended, and have deserved to return to their own country by the relative moral and intellectual progress which they have acquired.

(Matth. xxiv. 22 ; Mark xiii. 21.)—These words, understood spiritually and not literally, are designed to show how the Lord protects those who walk in his ways, and the assistance which these can give to their brethren. It is said that the Lord would shorten those days because of the elect, and that otherwise no flesh could be saved. This is figurative. Jesus gave an example and comparison, and it was an encouragement, and a reason for modification, in the sense that the elect (that is, those who walk in the ways of the Lord) work with indefatigable zeal at the progress of their inferiors, and thus aid in the advancement of all. Everything is linked together ; the planetary transformation is one consequence of the moral transformation of the spirits, according to the immutable and eternal laws of physical, moral, and intellectual progress. There is a general solidarity ; and there is nothing uncertain or arbitrary with God. The future is non-existent to him, being unrolled before his eyes as much and more than is the present moment before yours.

Men improve, and labour at each other's improvement, and thus aid in the fulfilment of the promises which God has made through his Messiahs, who are his special messengers ; while if (which is impossible) men had all remained in evil without desiring to emerge from it, the period of the transformation would come, and all men would have been cast down on the inferior worlds, and would have been replaced by other spirits in harmony with the degree of progress which the planet had accomplished, and had still to accomplish ; and thus "no flesh would have been saved."

The words of Jesus are always poetical and figurative, and you now understand the object of these hypothetical expressions, which were appropriate to the intelligence of the time, and were afterwards designed to fructify under the reign of the letter, and prepare for that of the Spirit.

You must understand us clearly. We have not said that these inevitable catastrophes will take place simultaneously. Ages are nothing to Him from whose thought they proceed. You are moving towards the end, but you are not told that it will happen to-morrow, or be accomplished in a day.

Do not rest your thoughts on these catastrophes, but prepare to come forth conquerors; that is, purified, having left the old man in the ruins of the old world; and being born anew on your renewed planet. Do not think more than needful on the material events which are about to happen, but try to prepare for the future of your humanity by working to perfect it as it is at present; and leave it to the Lord to send among you those who will come on purpose to rend the veil which still darkens your intelligence. A line is traced out for you which you cannot pass; remain within its limits; and you will find it to include sufficient development to exercise your faculties and good-will.

(Luke xxi. 20-24.)—In the discourses of Jesus, events which were present or near are linked with those which he foresaw in a distant future; and the form of his discourses intentionally prevented his hearers from distinguishing between the present and the future. Thus, in replying to the question of his disciples (Matth. xxiv. 1-3; Mark xiii. 1-4; Luke xxi. 5-7), the thought of Jesus included both the Hebrew Jerusalem and, figuratively, the world.

His prophetic answers relating to Jerusalem and the Jews, and recorded by Matthew and Mark under medianimic influence, represent figuratively the world, which will relatively undergo siege and calamities; and literally the destruction of the beloved city of the Jews. In the narrative of Luke, also written under medianimic influence, these answers include both the figurative sense relating to the future, and in a strict and proper sense, the Hebrew Jerusalem.

The words of Jesus were always appropriate to his immediate surroundings, but included a 'prophetic sense, hidden from most men, and designed to be understood progressively in spirit and in truth at the time of the new era of the Christianity of Christ. While the Jews regarded these words as representing the calamities which befel their Holy City, the Christians and believers should always see the phases through which humanity must pass. Like the Hebrew Jerusalem the world and its humanity must suffer many vicissitudes, and assaults. Terror will fall upon you, for the enemies whom you have to fear will assemble in great numbers to attack you. These enemies are your vices ; but do not allow yourselves to be conquered ; defend yourselves valiantly, for the actual Jerusalem will be destroyed, but you will rebuild an eternal city where the happy inhabitants will have nothing more to fear. Time, reincarnation and progress, in the course of planetary and human events, will accomplish this work of renovation in the physical order of your world, and in the moral and physical order of your humanity.

(Luke xxi. 24.)—These figurative words relate to the intermediate period between the time when Jesus spoke, and the advent of the Spirit, when his word would be revived in power in all its purity. The accomplishment of the times of the Gentiles in the universal reign of the law of love and charity which should extend like a cloak to shelter all the children of the earth, and lead them to fraternal unity by reciprocity and friendship.

MATTHEW, CHAP. XXIV.—VERSES 23-28. MARK, CHAP. XIII.—VERSES 21-23.

False Christs—False Prophets.

Matth. xxiv. (23) Then if any one shall say to you, Lo here is Christ ; or here ; believe it not. (24) For there shall appear false Christs and false prophets, and shall give great and ominous signs, so that if it were possible, they should deceive even the chosen. (25) Behold, I have told you before. (26) Therefore if they shall say to you, Behold he is in the desert, do not go forth ; behold he is in the secret chambers, believe it not. (27) For as the lightning cometh forth from the east, and shineth even to the west, so also shall be the coming of the Son of Man. (28) For wherever the carcase is, there shall the eagles be gathered together.

Mark xiii. (21) And then if anyone shall say to you, Lo here is the Christ, or Lo there, believe it not. (22) For there shall arise false Christs and false prophets, and shall give signs and portents, to lead astray, if it were possible, even the chosen. (23) And look to yourselves; therefore I have told you all things beforehand.

§ 269. These words are designed to put men on their guard against those who shall endeavour to lead them astray, in the name of Christ, from the law of love and charity which he preached. Such warnings were often given by Jesus, who foresaw the dissensions which human ambition would bring into his Church which was based on love, and which should lead men into selfishness, pride, and all those material impulses which cause them to deny even the existence of God. You should now refer to the explanations already given on similar passages. The period of which Jesus spoke is not confined to the narrow limits which men have supposed from interpreting his words literally. In the course of events, men will have to contend with the evil influences around them, just as at present; but these influences are already among you, and will continue to act upon you. All those who would bind your consciences by imposing on you a worship different from that which God has established—universal love—are false Christs and false prophets; and when they say to you, Christ is here, or there, do not listen to them. They will still try for a long time to turn you from the straight path, but do not listen to them, nor follow them. Until the day when Jesus shall appear in his glory (that is, when all men shall have been led to practise his law) you will hear it said, Christ is here; or Christ is there; and you should avoid allowing yourselves to be imposed upon by lying words.

When seeking for the true sense of the Master's words, you must not forget that he was speaking to Orientals, and that his language was always clothed in imagery suited to modify the meaning according to the intelligence of those to whom he spoke, who were first designed to understand them literally, and afterwards, under the influence of time and progress, spiritually. You yourselves do not yet understand his unveiled word, because you are not yet strong enough.

The truth is contained in what you are told, but in some cases it is not developed to its full extent. The full sense of certain passages is not given you, because it would make events definite which must still remain in doubt and uncertainty, until you have cultivated your faith, and made yourselves strong enough to see and understand everything. Do not forget that you are preparing the way ; and that the Master himself will come to enlighten your intelligence, and to free the spirit entirely from the letter.

(Matth. xxiv. 23, 24 ; Mark xiii. 21, 22.) - These words also refer to the period between the earthly mission of Jesus, and the time when the law of love which he preached by teaching and example, shall be understood and practised in all its purity. They relate to the efforts made to turn men aside from pure and simple obedience to the laws of God and of his messenger, and to compel them to submit to a religious code of human origin, which disfigures the simplest and highest morality which man can hope to attain. These words relate to the efforts of false shepherds, and to the inducements which they hold out to their flocks, to lead them in the wrong course. Jesus alludes to everything that has or will be attempted to turn men from the light, and to lead them into darkness, whatever may be the means employed. All those who divert you from the practice of love and charity, and pervert the admirable code which Christ has left you, are false Christs and false prophets, and are not to be heeded.

Occult influences are always combined with human influence, but Jesus makes no special allusion here to the former. Spiritual revelation and science have initiated you into the secrets of the other world, and taught you that those spiritual and medianimic phenomena which were ignorantly regarded as privileges or miracles in the sense of being a departure from the laws of nature, are only an application of them ; and that they may be produced by evil as well as good occult influences, by means of special organic faculties which the most unworthy of men may possess, as well as the most worthy.

Spiritual Revelation and science have thus taught you that the mere fact of spiritual or medianimic phenomena is by no means the criterion which could or should determine the morality and veracity of men. We have already explained the signs by which alone you can and ought to recognize the true Christs and true prophets.

What might be great prodigies to the men to whom Jesus spoke, and to the succeeding generations until your own days, when the spirit light is shining in the sight of all, cannot, and ought not, to lead you astray; for you have been forewarned, and are now enlightened. You should regard all those as false Christs and false prophets, and as conscious or unconscious instruments of error and darkness, no matter what great prodigies, and marvellous things, they may perform, if they try to divert you from the practice of love and charity, the teachings and examples of the Master, and the pure and simple law which he has given you. Do not believe them, nor follow them.

MATTHEW, CHAP. XXIV.—VERSES 29-31. MARK,
CHAP. XIII.—VERSES 24-27. LUKE, CHAP. XXI.
VERSES 25-28.

Signs of the Coming of Christ.

Matth. xxiv. (29) And immediately after the affliction of these days, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken. (30) And then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven, and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. (31) And he shall send forth his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and shall gather together his chosen from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other.

Mark xiii. (24) But in those days, after this distress, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars of heaven shall be cast down, (25) And the powers that are in the heavens shall be shaken. (26) And then shall be seen the Son of Man coming in the clouds with great power and glory. (27) And then shall he send forth his angels, and shall gather together his chosen from the four winds, from the utmost limit of the earth to the utmost limit of heaven.

Luke xxi. (25) And there shall be signs in the sun, and moon, and stars, and on earth anguish of nations in distress at the roaring of the sea and the waves. (26) Men fainting from fear, and foreboding of the things coming on the civilized world, for the powers of the heavens shall

be shaken. (27) And then shall be seen the Son of Man coming in a cloud, with great power and glory. (28) And when these things begin to take place, look up and raise your heads, for your redemption is at hand.

§ 270. (Matth. xxi. 29 ; Mark xiii. 24, 25 ; Luke xxi. 25, 26.)—These words contain a fresh announcement, under a veil, of the events which must take place in the physical and moral order, until the time when the kingdom of God shall be established in all hearts. In the physical order they relate to the successive partial revolutions which will effect the transformation of your planet. There is nothing abrupt in nature ; and just as the ages which have passed have brought you up to your present level, thus ages must still pass before you have attained the point which has been promised to you. Your globe, like all others, has risen from incandescent fluids, which are impure, in the sense that they are loaded with substances designed to compose matter ; and it must return to the pure fluids, freed from all material principles. For this purpose, the decomposition of matter must proceed by the same steps as its composition ; but before this you will have already undergone a prodigious modification. In order to attain to purity, you must gradually pass through every stage of moral and physical progress, and your planet must pass through all stages of physical progress. This progress will be partially effected by preparatory crises, which will renew the races of men by incarnating more advanced spirits, and will renovate the material conditions of the earth, by destroying its former principles, and gradually constructing new ones from them. Just as the inhabitants of the earth are now as far developed as the earth is prepared to minister to their requirements, and has undergone the needful transformations, so will your existing world become fitted for the necessities of the purified spirits who will be replaced upon it, after they have undergone the needful progressive modifications. Then the conditions of your globe will be different, for your humanity and your human envelope will also differ in various particulars ; and these changing conditions will be due to the difference of

moral and intellectual advancement, according to the portions of the globe which are modified. This is the case in all planets. Whatever the degree of spiritual advancement, there are always some more advanced than others, who aid the progress of those who are inferior to them ; and the conditions of life correspond to their advancement. You can form a definite idea of this, for although the physical conditions of your world are still material for all, the savages of Oceanica, or the Esquimaux, are widely different from the civilized inhabitants of Europe. The latter, by continuing their regular course in the path of progress, will enter first upon the new phases of life. In the progressive course of planetary events, the spiritual essences which are not yet sufficiently advanced, and which are only fitted for material development, will be removed from your globe. They will be replaced in appropriate conditions, but the crises necessary to bring your planet to its fluidic stage will destroy most of the material stations where the primitive spirit is developed. All the creatures of the Lord will be gradually reclassified afresh in a course which runs parallel to the progress of man, as regards the various kingdoms, and their habitation. The veiled allusion to the darkening of the sun and moon relates to the receding of the earth to a greater distance from these two orbs which give you light. The earth will depart from its present position when it becomes purified and resplendent with light.

In the moral order, the stars which fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens which are shaken, have begun to descend towards you, in order (to use the figurative expression of Jesus) to cause the sign of the Son of Man to appear in heaven. This sign is the law of love and charity of which Jesus is the personification, and which is manifested by the revelation which Jesus himself brought to men, as explained and developed by the Spirit of Truth. The stars or the powers of the heavens, the lights of the Lord, are the guardian spirits of humanity who bring the light of heaven before your eyes. These stars will fall, and these powers will be shaken more and more ; for the more you raise yourselves, the more will

high spirits approach you, and unfold to your eyes the unknown splendours which would dazzle you at present.

(Matth. xxiv. 30 ; Mark xiii. 26 ; Luke xxi. 27.)—The sign of the Son of Man which Jesus foretold should appear in heaven, is the advent of the kingdom of love and charity. The darnel will then have been completely separated from the good corn ; and men will be regenerated and prepared to receive the kingdom of God in their hearts. Then there will be only one fold and one Shepherd, at whose feet the flock will fall, weeping with gratitude and joy for the great mercies which have been lavished upon them ; and with sorrow for having misunderstood the paternal hand which directed them. Men will behold Jesus, when their eyes are pure enough to see him, coming in all his spiritual glory, when his kingdom is prepared to become one of the kingdoms of the Father, as the dwelling-place of pure spirits.

(Matth. xxiv. 31 ; Mark xiii. 27.)—Every creature is under the eye of the Lord, whatever the region which it inhabits, and none can escape his piercing gaze. Therefore let none of you hope to evade his justice, for the day of reckoning will come, when every man will pay his debt ; though some will be reckoned with more strictly than others. Those who are willing will be more lightly treated than those who hope to evade the justice of their Creator. There will be others who started later than you, and could not reach the same point. The justice of the Lord will assign each his share with equity, and everyone will receive according to his merits, and especially his sincerity.

(Matth. xxiv. 31 ; Mark xiii. 27.)—In these passages, you may understand heaven to mean space. Matthew speaks of the spirits inhabiting space, who shall come to dwell on your planet ; and Mark speaks of all the various classes of spirits. You can understand that when the renovation of your planet has been completed, many of you will be purified from all stains, and will thus have laid aside your own garments, till it shall please the Lord to clothe you afresh. Others will have made less progress, and will require to pass through the last phases to complete their purification, and will still

be incarnate on your planet during its last revolutions. It is in reference to this that Mark speaks ; not that renovation will be effected on living matter, but because many of you will still be living on earth during the last crisis. But the changes to be effected in the human organism will not take place suddenly, or within the limits of one material existence. They will be brought about gradually, and always by means of reincarnations which will effect a gradual modification and improvement of human matter at every new phase.

(Luke xxi. 28.)—The word redemption in the thought of the Master, stands for regeneration. And your regeneration is truly near, for the guardian spirits of man have already begun to descend to you, to prepare the advent of the kingdom of love and charity. The Messiahs, or the especial messengers of the Lord, will come among you in succession, aided by missionary spirits ; and the planetary events consequent upon your moral progress will also succeed each other in the course of ages, to effect the progressive purification and transformation of your world.

MATTHEW, CHAP. XXIV.—VERSES 32-35. MARK,
CHAP. XIII.—VERSES 28-31. LUKE, CHAP. XXI.
VERSES 29-33.

Parable of the Fig-Tree.

Matth. xxiv. (32) Learn a parable from the fig-tree. When its young branch is already tender, and puts forth leaves, you know that summer is near. (33) So also ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is nigh, at the doors. (34) Verily I say unto you, This generation shall by no means pass away until all these things shall be fulfilled. (35) Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.

Mark xiii. (28) And learn the parable from the fig-tree. When the young branch is already tender, and puts forth leaves, you know that summer is near. (29) So also you, when ye shall see these things come to pass, know that it is near, at the doors. (30) Verily I say unto you that this generation shall by no means pass away until all these things shall be fulfilled. (31) Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.

Luke xxi. (29) And he spoke a parable to them. You see the fig-tree and all the trees. (30) When they already shoot forth, you look on them, and know that summer is already near. (31) So also you,

when you see these things come to pass, know that the kingdom of God is near. (32) Verily I say unto you that this generation shall by no means pass away, till all these things shall be fulfilled. (33) Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.

§ 271. (Matth. xxiv. 32, 33 ; Mark xiii. 28, 29 ; Luke xxi. 29-31.)—The parable or similitude of the fig-tree is only a further development of the idea of Jesus regarding the appearance of the sign of the Son of Man in heaven on the approach of your redemption. He designed to make a stronger impression both on his hearers, and on succeeding generations ; and more especially on those who, like you, should behold the promised advent of the Spirit of Truth on the horizon by the New Revelation, and should be required to understand the Master's words in spirit and in truth. Do not lose sight of what we have said before of the kingdom of Jesus, the Son of Man, as the personification of his morality ; and of the physical progress of your planet and its humanity, always corresponding with your moral and intellectual progress, of which it is the result. You will then understand that if the advent of the kingdom of God, and of the Son of Man, is near, both will draw nearer and nearer in proportion to the accomplishment of the events predicted. The advent of the kingdom of love and charity, and consequently the complete purification and transformation of your planet and its humanity, will also draw nearer and nearer.

(Matth. xxiv. 34 ; Mark xiii. 30 ; Luke xxi. 32.)—The Master's words were designedly hidden under the veil of the letter, like all the allegorical expressions which he used concerning his future advent and the end of the world. All his prophecies, coupled with those revealed to John in the Isle of Patmos, were intended as a means of human progress, and were designed to leave the men of that and succeeding generations in doubt and uncertainty as to their actual meaning. The literal meaning of the words according to the letter which killeth, would be absurd, and time has shewn them to be false. But interpreted according to the Spirit which giveth life, Jesus spoke of the generation of incarnate spirits then living on

your earth, who have since been reclothed, and who will still live reincarnated on your planet during the last phases of the moral and physical transformation of your earth and its humanity. The mystery of Reincarnation pervades all the teachings of Jesus, and is the only key which will enable you to understand them.

(Matth. xxiv. 35, &c.)—Everything in space, and all worlds, like your earth, passes in the physical order into the crucible of Creation, in the sense that, according to the laws of destruction, reproduction and progress, everything is renewed, purified and transformed, to proceed from the infinitely little to the infinitely great, in universal life and harmony. But the words of Jesus, the organ of the Omnipotent Father, shall not pass away, for they are immutable and eternal, like the law of progress for the spirit, in the physical, moral and intellectual order; and the natural laws, in the material and fluidic order. His words shall not pass away, for they are the principle, and means of progress in the lower worlds of trials and expiations; and the only way which can lead man towards the superior worlds.

MATTHEW, CHAP. XXIV.—VERSES 36-39. MARK,
CHAP. XIII.—VERSES 32-37. LUKE, CHAP. XXI.
VERSES 34-38.

Times of Change Unknown.

Matth. xxiv. (36) But no man knows of this day and hour, neither the angels of the heavens, but the Father only. (37) And as it was in the days of Noah, so also shall be the coming of the Son of Man. (38) For as they were in the days before the flood, eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day when Noah entered into the ark, (39) And knew not until the flood came and destroyed them all, so also shall be the coming of the Son of Man.

Mark xiii. (32) But concerning this day and hour, no man knoweth, neither the angels who are in heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only. (33) Be on your guard, watch and pray, for you know not when is the time. (34) As a man going abroad leaves his house, and hands over his possessions to his servants, and assigns his work to each, and to the porter to watch. (35) Watch ye therefore, for you do not know when the master of the house comes, at evening, or at midnight, or at cock-crow, or in the morning, (36) Lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping. (37) And what I say to you, I say to all, Watch.

Luke xxi. (34) And take heed to yourselves, lest your hearts should be oppressed with debauchery and drunkenness, and the anxieties of

life, and that day come upon you unawares. (35) For as a snare shall it come upon all those resting on the face of the whole earth. (36) Therefore watch ye and pray in every season that ye may be deemed worthy to escape all these things which are about to come to pass, and to stand in the presence of the Son of Man. (37) And in the daytime he was teaching in the Temple, and at night he went out and abode on the hill called the Mount of Olives. (38) And all the people came to him early in the morning in the Temple, to hear him.

§ 272 (Matth. xxiv. 36 ; Mark xiii. 32.)—Jesus led men to perceive how vain it would be for them to seek into the mysteries of the future, which God alone can foresee. He thus condemned beforehand the idea of the divinity which he foreknew would be ascribed to him by men during the time needful to transform a material into a spiritual religion. God always excuses sincere error in opinions. Pride, hypocrisy, deceit, and lying are the only faults punished, for these only are really culpable. Thus, the sincere error of those who believe in the divinity of Christ is excused by God, and they will receive light afterwards ; but those who insist on the divinity of Christ, and struggle to maintain it, although they do not believe in it themselves ; and knowingly reject the new Revelation, although believing it to be true, are traffickers in Christianity, and hypocrites ; and a long and painful expiation awaits them.

Good and evil always exist side by side on your planet, which is still one of the inferior worlds ; and evil is often employed to lead to good, in the sense that the Lord's paternal hand directs evil in such a manner as to cause it to bring forth good fruits. Consequently, when men are sufficiently developed, morally and intellectually, to behold the truth, without veil or disguise, though some endeavour to perpetuate error, the Lord has permitted a brighter light to shine forth, which shall make everything plain at once ; for the truth will appear suddenly to the eyes of men, stripped of everything which concealed it, and will shine with a much brighter lustre than if they had been gradually accustomed to behold it in its purity.

You can perceive that if Jesus had been God, or a portion of God, and equal to him, he also would know what God only knows. But by speaking as he did, he clearly explained

that whatever might be the extent of his knowledge and power relatively to the spirits around him, he could not be equal to God; for however perfect he might be, he was nevertheless a created spirit, and therefore could never equal the Uncreated Creator; God. He also implied that whatever the elevation of a spirit, or whatever his rank in the spirit-hierarchy, he can never equal in knowledge and power Him from whose will everything proceeds. This was an act of humility on the part of him who is the greatest of the great on your planet.

Men, who are so vain of yourselves, imitate his humility, and do not strive to equal Him who rules over all by seeking to penetrate into the mysteries of the future; for this would result in your shame and confusion. If you abandon yourselves to vain pride by trying to penetrate further into the mysteries of the real life than is given you at present, you will be led into fatal errors. Spiritists, you know the dangers which you run by diving into such depths. Do not therefore venture into them inconsiderately, nor let a vain pride urge you to desire to penetrate further than your brethren into secrets which it is not yet permitted you to fathom. The task of each day is sufficient for itself. Leave to those who come after you the work which they must accomplish.

(Matth. xxiv. 37-39.)—These words were designedly veiled to meet the requirements of the present and the future, and Jesus alluded to Noah's deluge, which was the only one remembered at that period. This deluge was only a partial renovation; or one of the planetary phases of your planet and its inhabitants, which gave birth to new products. As everything is in harmony throughout nature, when the human organization is modified, the products of the earth are modified to follow the general progress. Until the complete renovation of your planet, incarnations will vary little by little, as the correlative changes of the planet may require; but this variation will be partial. Everything will take place according to the law of wisdom and order which directs the universe. Thus

some portions of the earth will receive more advanced spirits, and consequently incarnations corresponding with their degree of advancement; while others will remain under conditions nearly similar to yours at present.

(Matth. xxiv. 37-39; Mark xiii. 33, 37; Luke xxi. 34, 36.—Jesus desired to persuade men to work at their progress by overcoming the predominance of matter, and thus to keep themselves always in expectation of those things which were to happen, though veiled by the letter; and which were foretold as liable to happen at any moment in a very near future. Men were thus compelled to exercise a constant vigilance over themselves, and were incited both to constant ardour in progress, and to an unalterable hope in the promises of the Lord. A spirit should always hold himself in the Lord's presence by prayer. He should pray for his own advancement, and for that of his incarnate brethren; he should pray for all when he is at liberty, and prayer then becomes action; for you must not suppose that when Jesus enjoins constant prayer, he requires that either man or spirit should always be at his devotions, as you understand the term. The efficacy of prayer lies in the good words which should follow your uttered prayers, like an Amen which is agreeable to the Lord. Pray without ceasing, to avert the stroke of judgment, for the good works which complete your prayers wrap you in a mantle of purity in the eyes of the Lord.

(Luke xxi. 36.)—These words, like those previously quoted, "This generation shall not pass away till all these things are fulfilled," contain a necessary allusion to the reincarnation of those who have fallen behind, and will be reincarnated at those points of your planet where the cataclysms resulting from planetary changes will occur; and the position occupied by those who will be sufficiently advanced to be in the superior worlds at the time of these events, ready to come to your purified and transformed planet, and to follow its ascending course at the period when Jesus will appear afresh, but this time in his full spiritual glory.

MATTHEW, CHAP. XXIV.—VERSES 40-44. LUKE,
CHAP. XII.—VERSES 39-40.

Need for Vigilance.

Matth. xxiv. (40) Then shall two men be in the field ; the one shall be taken, and the other left. (41) Two women shall be grinding in the mill ; one shall be taken, and the other left. (42) Watch therefore, for you know not at what hour your Lord cometh. (43) But know this, that if the master of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and not have permitted his house to be broken into. (44) Therefore be ye also ready, for in an hour you think not of, the Son of Man cometh.

Luke xii. (39) But know this, that if the master of the house had known at what hour the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken into. (40) Therefore be ye also ready, for in an hour you think not of, the Son of Man cometh.

§ 273 (Matth. xxiv. 40, 41.)—We refer you to the explanations already given of similar words spoken by Jesus at another time and place. Some will profit by the regeneration, and others will be cast down on the inferior planets ; thus one portion of mankind will advance, and the other will be unworthy to share in the new incarnations.

(Matth. xxiv. 42-44 ; Luke xii. 39, 40.)—Jesus insists and dwells upon the uncertainty of the day and hour of the physical and moral events which he had already predicted, to keep men unceasingly watchful and on their guard. How few yet perceive the signs of the times,* of the new era of the Christianity of Christ, the dawn of the regeneration of your humanity. The work of progress pursues its course, but you know not how far it must go, nor when it will please the Master to put the last touch to the work of your regeneration. Hold yourselves on your guard, and ready ; for you may be surprised when you are unprepared ; and the Lord rejects the idle servants who have neglected to look for his coming.

* These words were dictated in August 1863.

MATTHEW, CHAP. XXIV.—VERSES 45–51. LUKE,
CHAP. XII.—VERSES 41–46.

Parable of the Faithful and Unfaithful Servants.

Matth. xxiv. (45) Who then is the wise and faithful servant, whom his lord shall set over his household to give them their food in season? (46) Blessed is that servant whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing. (47) Verily I say unto you that he will set him over all his possessions. (48) But if that wicked servant shall say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming, (49) And shall begin to beat his fellow-servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken, (50) The lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looks not for him, and at an hour which he knows not, (51) And shall cut him in twain, and shall appoint him his portion with the hypocrites; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Luke xii. (41) And Peter said to him, Lord, dost thou speak this parable to us, or to all? (42) And the Lord said, Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom the lord shall set over his household, to give out the measure of corn in due season? (43) Happy is that servant whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing. (44) In truth I say unto you, he will place him over all his possessions. (45) But if that servant shall say in his heart, My lord delays to come; and shall begin to beat the youths and maidens, and to eat and drink, and be drunken, (46) The lord of that servant shall come on a day when he does not expect him, and at an hour which he knows not, and shall cut him in twain, and appoint him his lot with the unfaithful.

§ 274. These words apply to those who have accepted the direction of their brethren, and are appointed to guide them in the path of progress, and to diffuse light among them. Happy are those faithful servants who distribute food in due season, and to each his due measure of corn ! They scatter light and truth among those whom they are appointed to direct, in proportion as it is revealed to themselves, in the course of time ; and they aid the generations to advance by word, and especially by example, instead of seeking to mislead them. Their reward will be great, for they will see the paths which lead to perfection opening wider and wider before them, and these will give them access to the Almighty Lord, who will cause them to share in his intelligence, power, and love, in universal life and harmony.

But those who abuse their authority, and the confidence of which they are unworthy, to mislead those whom they ought to guide, and to bind a bandage over the eyes of

those whom they ought to enlighten ; and who give themselves up to the pleasures of humanity, abusing the wealth which they ought not even to touch, will be severely punished. These wicked servants are more guilty, and will be punished more severely, than others, for they take a much greater responsibility upon themselves, and will have to endure the punishment of the faults which they have caused others to commit, in addition to that due to their own. The brighter and stronger the light shines, and the louder and clearer the voice of the Lord is heard, the more terrible will be the account which those unworthy servants must render, who ought to have guided and instructed those who were entrusted to their care ; for the more they have received, the more will be expected of them.

He who is charged with the guidance of his brethren incurs a much heavier responsibility than others. He must necessarily be supposed to be superior to them ; but if, instead of devoting his care to those who are entrusted to him, he neglects or misguides them, he renders them unable to advance, and to do the work of the Master. Then the unfaithful servant who undertook to guide his weaker brethren will have a strict account to render. He will have to atone, not only for the evil which he has done, but for the evil which he has caused, or which he might have prevented, but did not. He will then be rejected as unfaithful, but will still serve as a guide to the blind, and an adviser to the deaf ; and will then regret bitterly that he did not accomplish his mission when he was with intelligent beings, capable of understanding him. Then indeed there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth, for the spirit who is exiled to the inferior worlds will suffer the more in proportion as he has been more advanced in this one. Mighty ones of the earth, whoever you may be, who have asked and obtained the mission to guard and direct your brethren in the paths of physical, moral and intellectual order, what we have just told you, according to the Spirit, explains the Master's words

in the spiritual order, but it is also applicable to you in the temporal order, both as regards reward and punishment.

LUKE, CHAP. XII.—VERSES 47, 48.

Responsibility of the Spirit.

(47) But the servant who knows the will of his Lord, and does not prepare for him, nor do according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes; (48) But he who knew it not, and shall do things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. And to whom much has been given, much will be required of him; and they will seek more abundantly from him with whom they deposit much.

§ 275. It is obvious that he who commits a fault after being forewarned, is more guilty than he who is only aware that he has done evil, but has no clear idea of it. Thus, the brighter the light shines before your eyes, and the more warnings and advice you receive, the more guilty you will become, if you wander from the path which is pointed out to you. Much will be required of him to whom much has been given; and he ought to make fruitful what has been entrusted to him. The good seed sown in him should yield the fullest measure possible to his moral and intellectual development; an hundredfold, sixtyfold, or fortyfold.

MATTHEW, CHAP. XXV.—VERSES 1-13.

Parable of the Ten Virgins.

(1) Then the kingdom of the heavens shall be likened unto ten virgins, who took their lamps, and went out to meet the bridegroom. (2) And five of them were wise, and five foolish. (3) Those who were foolish took their lamps, but took no oil with them. (4) But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. (5) And while the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept. (6) And at midnight there was a shouting, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him. (7) Then all these virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps. (8) And the foolish said to the wise, Give us of your oil, for our lamps are gone out. (9) But the wise answered and said, Not so, lest there should not be enough for us and you, but go rather to those who sell, and buy for yourselves. (10) And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came, and they who were ready went in with him to the nuptials, and the door was shut. (11) And afterwards came also the remaining virgins, saying,

Lord, Lord, open to us. (12) And he answered and said to them, Verily I say unto you, I know you not. (13) Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man cometh.

§ 276. Some have not understood this parable, and others have falsified its sense and object. It was designed to keep men on their guard, and to teach them that they should not wait till the last moment to think of reformation and improvement, lest it should be too late. The virtues of some cannot atone in any way for the vices of others. You can only aid your brethren by your advice and example, but you cannot make them sharers in your oil; that is, in the merit of your works, which can only be applicable to those who perform them. Therefore let everyone work at his own reformation and advancement, and then the indifferent or the sluggard will see that it is time for him to set to work, lest, while he is thinking about it, he should be summoned unawares before the Judge. You must not suppose that Jesus intended to preach selfishness, but should understand that he only desired to warn you against the carelessness which leads you to postpone until next day an action that ought to be performed immediately, relying on the saints, priestly intercessions, and clerical absolutions to ensure your salvation; whereas you cannot attain it by any means but by your own personal actions.

(Verses 6-13).—As the wise virgins did not wish to discourage those who had neglected to take proper precautions in time, they sent them to those who might be able to help them. In the present case, the former knew that what merit they possessed was scarcely enough for themselves, and they could not impart it to anyone; while even if they could, their sharing it would have been insufficient. Time pressed, and they were incapable of aiding those who needed help, for they themselves had just been called. Therefore let the negligent virgins who have made no provision beforehand, go to those who can give them needful aid. The oil-merchants who can replenish the empty lamps are the good spirits of the Lord. They

will sell it, for in aiding others to advance, they themselves advance also. Everything is in common between you and them, and the price they receive is in the progress which they help you to make, according to the law of brotherly aid and friendship. But if the virgins wait too long before they seek their aid, and are too slow in asking for the oil which should sustain the lamps, without which they cannot enter with the bridegroom, they will arrive too late, and when they believe their lamps are sufficiently filled, the banquet-hall will be closed. In truth, when idle or negligent spirits behold the approach of the regeneration, and seeing the progress which their brethren have made, desire to walk by their side, they will be unable to follow them, but will be stopped on the threshold of the new home, and will be obliged to complete on an inferior planet the progress which they have neglected on this. Watch, therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour when the bridegroom will come; the day and hour of the regeneration when the Master will arrive.

LUKE, CHAP. XII.—VERSES 35—38.

Watchfulness.

(35) Let your loins be girded, and your lamps burning. (36) And be yourselves like men expecting their lord, when he returns from the wedding, that when he comes and knocks, they may open to him immediately. (37) Blessed are those servants whom the Lord shall find watching when he comes; verily I say unto you that he shall gird himself, and make them sit down, and come and wait on them. (38) And if he shall come in the second or in the third watch, and shall find them thus, blessed are these servants.

§ 277. Be always vigilant, and always ready to appear before your Master, and to receive him when it is his pleasure either to send emissaries, or to come himself. The Master came, and the Apostles were ready to receive him, and their reward has been great; but he will come again. The night is advancing, the second watch begins with the new era to which Jesus alludes in thought; and he sends his messengers, the organs of the Spirit of Truth, to prepare for his coming. Hold yourselves in readiness for the third

watch, for he desires to find you ready to receive him, and purified by the merit of your works, which will cause your souls to shine with a pure, warm light in the presence of the Lord. "He will make you sit down, and will wait upon you;" for he will show you the unveiled truth, and will lead you to perfection.

MATTHEW, CHAP. XXV.—VERSES 14-30. LUKE,
CHAP. XIX.—VERSES 11-27.

Parable of the Talents.

Matth. xxv. (14) For it is like a man going abroad, who called his own servants, and entrusted to them his possessions. (15) And to one he gave five talents, and to another two, and to another one, to each according to his own ability; and immediately he went abroad. (16) And he who had received the five talents, traded with them, and gained five talents more. (17) So also he who had received two, gained two more. (18) But he who had received the one talent, went and dug in the ground, and hid his lord's money. (19) And after a long time, the lord of these servants comes, and settles his account with them. (20) And coming to him who had received five talents, he brought him five more talents, saying, Lord, thou hast given me five talents, behold I have gained five other talents with them. (21) And his lord said to him, Well done, good and faithful servant, thou hast been faithful over a few things; I will appoint thee over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy lord. (22) And he also who had received two talents, came and said, Lord, thou hast given me two talents, behold I have gained two other talents with them. (23) His lord said to him, Well done, good and faithful servant, thou hast been faithful over a few things; I will appoint thee over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy lord. (24) And he who had received the one talent came and said, Lord, I knew that thou art a hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not scattered. (25) And I was afraid, and went away, and hid thy talent in the earth; lo thou hast thine own. (26) And his lord answered and said to him, Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knowest that I reap where I have not sown, and gather where I have not scattered. (27) Therefore shouldst thou have put my money to the bankers, and when I came, I should have received my own with interest. (28) Therefore take away the talent from him, and give it to him who has the ten talents. (29) For to him who hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance; but from him who hath not shall be taken away even what he hath. (30) And cast ye the unprofitable servant into the darkness outside; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Luke xix. (11) And while they were listening to these things, he added and spoke a parable, because he was near to Jerusalem, and they thought that the kingdom of God was immediately about to appear. (12) Therefore he said, A certain nobleman went into a distant country, to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return. (13) And having called

ten of his servants, he gave them ten minæ, and said to them, Trade till I come. (14) But his citizens hated him, and sent an embassy after him, saying, We will not have this man to rule over us. (15) And it came to pass that when he returned after receiving his kingdom, he ordered those servants to be called to him, to whom he had given the money, that he might know what had been gained by trading. (16) And the first came and said, Lord, thy mina has gained ten minæ. (17) And he said to him, Well done, good servant, because thou hast been faithful over a very little, thou shalt have authority over ten cities. (18) And the second came, saying, Lord, thy mina has gained five minæ. (19) And he said to him also, And thou shalt be over five cities. (20) And another came saying, Lord, here is thy mina, which I have kept laid by in a napkin. (21) For I feared thee, because thou art a hard man; thou takest what thou hast not laid by, and reapest where thou hast not sown. (22) And he saith to him, Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee, thou wicked servant. Thou knewest me to be a hard man, taking what I had not laid up, and reaping what I did not sow. (23) Ought you not therefore to have given my money into the bank, and then when I came, I should have exacted it with interest? (24) And he said to the bystanders, Take away the mina from him, and give it to him who has ten minæ. (25) And they said to him, Lord, he has ten minæ! (26) For I say unto you, that unto whomsoever hath shall be given, and from him who hath not, shall be taken away even what he seemeth to have. (27) But as for my enemies, who did not wish me to reign over them, bring them here, and slay them in my presence.

§ 278. We have already told you that the parables of Jesus were often repeated with slight variations, being the same in meaning, but appropriated to the intelligence of those who heard them. Such is the case with the parables of the talents, and of the ten minæ.

In the parable of the minæ, Jesus alludes more especially (verses 11, 12, 14, 17) to the laws which he came to teach; to the ingratitude of men, who rejected them by falsifying or evading them, and to the punishment which would await those hardened spirits who persisted in their selfishness and pride.

The threat of the king who commands his rebellious subjects to be slain before him, alludes to the sentence of banishment which will be pronounced against hardened offenders when the time of general retribution shall come. It has the same meaning as verse 30 of Matthew, relative to the unprofitable servant being thrown into the darkness without; that is, removed from your planet, and cast down on the inferior planets, during the separation of the darnel from the good corn. The king's threat, and the fate of the

unprofitable servant were materialized to inspire fear in the Jews who heard them, and who understood them literally and not spiritually.

Apart from the variations just mentioned, the object of the two parables is the same, and the same explanations will apply to both, though they were spoken at different times and places. These parables, like that of the ten virgins, have either not been understood, or their meaning and object has been misrepresented. The reason of all criticisms, though the results differ, is always the same. When the parabolic sense is apparently limited, men take the letter; and when the letter is limited, they seek for a hidden meaning. Thus the meaning of the parables of Jesus is either obscured or falsified. Let those who would destroy without exactly knowing why, read with more attention and without bias. And if it is not too much for their pride, let them also appeal in heart to Him who quickens the intelligence, and they will understand better; but they have not yet reached this point. At present* they are overthrowing a tottering edifice, and they heap the materials on the ground, without either asking what may be the result, or regarding the confusion which may arise from their conduct, or pitying the weak minds who still shelter themselves under the old Church. They cast down and overturn, but the time will come when their successors will sort the stones, choose the good materials, cast away the bad, and rebuild an edifice on immovable foundations, whence men can draw love, charity, faith, and hope.

We cannot too often remind you that all the parables of Jesus have a hidden meaning which applies to future ages, but were designed to be understood literally by those who heard them, and therefore deal with material subjects in accordance with the manners and intelligence of the age. Consequently all these parables admit both of a veiled and prophetic sense, and of a material sense adapted to the intelligence of the period. We now give you the meaning

* These words were medianimically dictated in August, 1863.

of the parables of the talents and of the minæ, in spirit and in truth. The Lord never demands of any man more than what is just, having regard to your limited capacities and human weakness; but he wishes you to use all your efforts to advance, and has given you the germ which you ought to develop. Do not think, because you are less highly gifted than your brethren, that you may therefore rest in idleness. Do not argue that you are not clever; that you have been disinherited; that the Lord requires so much from his creatures that it would be impossible for you to satisfy him; and that you would deserve even less by making useless efforts, because you would draw down upon you still more of what you call his wrath, but which is really his justice. The Lord is just and equitable, and although you have not all reached the same point, and although all do not appear to be gifted with the same number of talents, yet you may always succeed, by perseverance, in deserving more. You have all started from the same point, and will all arrive at the same goal; but some of you are more indolent than others. From these, the Lord takes away the "talent" or "mina" which they possess; for as their idleness and ignorance renders it impossible for them to keep up with the faithful servants, they will be cast into surroundings suited to their dispositions, under inferior conditions to those which they have enjoyed. They will then suffer both from the loss of their position, and from the more severe labour necessary to regain it. Jesus did not mean that the Lord who is just in all things would hand over to his active servants the small amount of virtue and activity possessed by his unprofitable servants; but only that the former who have deserved more will advance more rapidly, and receive more of the Master's favours.

In speaking of the third servant, Jesus alludes to those malevolent spirits who seek to screen their own misdeeds by accusing others of them. Far be it from the "Son" to accuse the "Father," and the reply put into the mouth of the Master, means, "Since you consider me so harsh and exacting, gathering where I have not stored, and reaping

where I have not sown, how could you sleep thus, and make no efforts to satisfy me? Ought you not, on the contrary, if you did not feel strong enough to succeed by your own efforts, to have gone to those who could have assisted you, to return me the interest of what I gave you ; that is, progress?" The "bankers" spiritually signify those who could develop the love of progress in the third servant ; and consequently are represented according to the letter, as those who would pay the interest which the master required from his servant. According to the hidden meaning of the parable, you must understand bankers to mean those who can aid others to advance, both on earth and in space, whether incarnate or errant spirits.

You should also understand the words of Jesus according to the material sense. The law of Moses forbade taking of interest, as well as slavery, among the Hebrews. Consequently it was a foreign practice ; and according to perverted interpretations, it was maintained that the prohibition applied only to Hebrews among themselves, but not to a Hebrew in his dealings with foreigners ; and that any exaction, though blameable when used towards a Hebrew, was just in the case of a foreigner. There is no question here about banking as understood in your own days, but exchange. This transaction allowed the man who received a sum on deposit, to traffic with it by exchanging it for some description of merchandise, and dividing the profits more or less equally with the owner of the money. Remember the thousand tricks invented by cupidity to evade the laws ; look what passes around you, and you will understand that there were money-changers, receiving money, and paying interest, or giving value for it, according to the necessities of the age.

(Matth. xxv. 29 ; Luke xix. 26.)—These words are the same as those which Jesus had already spoken in the parable of the sower ; you will find them explained at vol. ii. pp. 45-47.

We now pass on to the veiled and prophetic meaning of the talents and the minæ. The thought of Jesus included

the period of his earthly mission, his return to the higher regions at his Ascension, the period preparatory to his return to your planet, which is the new spiritual era of the Christianity of Christ, and the period of his own return. He warns men to pursue the development of their moral and intellectual progress with active, earnest, and sustained efforts, and that every one will be required to give an account of the faculties which he has received from the Lord. All can use and develop these faculties with the aid of the "bankers," during their life on earth and in space; and this aid they ought to seek. God has given men time, expiation, and reincarnation to help them to fulfil their task, for the darnel must grow by the side of the good corn until the regeneration, of which no man knows the day and hour. At this period, the spirits who still remain guilty, rebellious, idle, ignorant, proud, or selfish, and are thus unable or unworthy to participate in the regeneration, will be removed from your earth, and cast down to the inferior planets. Their grief and remorse will be great, and their expiation will be long. The labour of regaining their lost position will be more severe; but those who have laboured at their progress in proportion to their capacities, will be rewarded according to their works and the purity of their intentions, at the time of the classification which will take place during this period of regeneration and purification; and afterwards upon your purified and regenerated planet.

MATTHEW, CHAP. XXV.—VERSES 31-46.

Parable of the Last Judgment.

(31) When the Son of Man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory. (32) And all nations shall be assembled before him, and he shall separate them from each other, as the shepherd separates the sheep from the kids. (33) And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, and the kids on his left. (34) Then shall the King say to those on his right hand, Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit ye the kingdom which has been prepared for you from the beginning of the world. (35) For I was hungry, and ye gave me to eat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me in; (36) Naked, and ye clothed me; I was sick, and ye visited me; I was in prison, and ye came to me. (37) Then

shall the righteous answer him saying, Lord, when saw we thee hungry, and fed thee; or thirsty, and gave thee drink? (38) And when saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in; or naked and clothed thee? (39) Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? (40) And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me. (41) Then shall he say also unto those on the left, Depart from me, ye accursed, into the age-lasting fire which is prepared for the devil and his angels. (42) For I was hungry, and ye gave me not to eat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink; (43) I was a stranger, and you received me not; naked, and ye clothed me not; sick and in prison, and ye visited me not. (44) Then shall these also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee hungry, or thirsty, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? (45) Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have not done it unto one of the least of these, neither have ye done it unto me. (46) And these shall go away into age-lasting punishment, but the righteous into age-lasting life.

§ 279. These words have formed the foundation of many human opinions and interpretations. When taken literally, they have been misunderstood and falsely interpreted, but everything has its object in the course of progress, and contributes to the purification and progress of the worlds and their humanities; and they must now be explained to you in spirit and in truth.

Jesus desired to set before his disciples a vivid picture of the Last Judgment, which should make an indelible impression on their minds. Men who were accustomed to tremble before the judges, and could hardly be restrained by any laws, however severe, needed a vivid material illustration of the judgment to which they would be subjected, and of its consequences. The chief priests of the Temple were the judges in Israel, and they frequently passed terrible and arbitrary sentences, which yet were far from imposing respect for the laws.

(Verses 31, 32.)—Men have understood “the end,” and have classed the events together. Jesus spoke of the successive periods which should run their course until the mild true light shall enlighten the world. The throne of the glory of Jesus is the period when the masses shall bow to his law. His throne will then be finally established in the hearts of all creatures, and the angels of the Lord will surround him, and will descend towards you. Has not this

period already begun? Is not the Saviour's throne prepared to receive him, and do not the angels of the Most High descend to teach you to sing the glory of the Almighty, by preparing you for the advent of the Spirit by the practice of justice, charity, and love; and to open before you the sources of intellectual progress through moral progress, by teaching you to be meek and humble in heart, and disinterested and devoted to your brethren? Are not the nations all gathered under the eyes of the Saviour, and can you not perceive that the expression is materialized, like all others in the Gospels?

Has not the separation been going on from the beginning? Ever since the appearance of man upon your planet, those spirits who have deserved to inhabit superior portions of your earth, or higher worlds, have been promoted to these higher conditions, while guilty spirits, in proportion to their guilt and need of progress, have been sent by way of punishment and expiation, either into inferior conditions on your earth, or to planets inferior to yours. Up to your own days, the darnel has been allowed to grow with the wheat, and will be permitted to do so until the regeneration is about to be accomplished, and the purification of your earth is gradually effected. But at this period the separation will be complete, and the guilty spirits who are opposed to progress will no longer be permitted to reincarnate themselves upon your earth. Only those who have become capable and worthy of walking in the paths of the regeneration will be admitted, and will be placed under the necessary conditions. Jesus alludes here to this separation, which will be entirely accomplished when your planet enters upon its fluidic phases. The period of this separation has been falsely interpreted as a single and sudden event; but this is figurative. No definite period can be assigned for this progressive work; but it will be the age which will precede the complete purification of your earth. Jesus will return among you when your humanity is ready to attain to moral perfection, and his coming will be hailed with a unanimous cry of joy and homage: "Blessed is he who cometh in the name of the Lord."

(Verses 33-46.)—These words are also figurative, and appropriate to the intelligence of those whom Jesus desired to impress and awaken. The just, on the right hand, are the spirits who have profited by the regeneration upon your earth, or those who have come from other worlds, sufficiently purified and advanced, who will be allowed to dwell on your regenerated planet under conditions needful to progress there, and to share in its ascending course. They will be “the blessed of the Father,” because they will have worked actively at their personal and mutual progress. God blesses those who labour at their own perfection, and at that of their brethren; and blessings descend on those whose works draw them down. The place reserved for the chosen and the worthy means the lofty regions where every spirit is called, from his origin, to receive his share of the inheritance when he shall have attained his spiritual majority. The just shall enter into age-long life; they will walk in the path of progress which will give them spiritual life in eternity, exempt from any incarnation, when they shall have become pure spirits.

The accursed, on the left of the King, are the guilty spirits who will depart to regions where they will suffer constantly, either in the errant state in space, or in the incarnate state. These are regions of expiation, but also of trials and progress, perpetually renewed by slow and progressive purifications and transformations on the inferior worlds, which are prepared for the guilty spirits in the sense that they serve for their dwelling, and are both hell and purgatory to those who are figuratively called, the “devil and his angels,” according to their degree of perversity; for they are places of punishment, and also of expiation, reparation, and progress. Such is the spirit of the parable; the letter, which veils the spirit, was purposely given by Jesus under a material form, in regard to the barbarous ages through which it would pass, that it might govern them by inspiring them with terror.

The humane doctrine of eternal punishment had also an object. It was the result of the reign of the letter, which

was necessary for a time, until man had advanced sufficiently in the path of moral and intellectual progress. Have you not been told that the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life? These were prophetic words addressed to the future, which were intended to be understood and applied at the predicted time, when the spirit should illumine the letter by revealing its true sense. The threats of eternal fire and everlasting torments as the meaning of eternal punishment to the guilty spirit are fictitious, and never entered the thoughts of Jesus. Those who are banished will be cast into the regions of darkness. They will be sent to worlds of expiation where the spirit of evil rules with sovereign power, and will be condemned to live for ages longer in sorrow and suffering. It is there that there will be tears and groans, and it is there that the fire which is not quenched consumes the spirit whose perversity causes him to be rejected, and cast down upon those unhappy worlds where he will preserve the memory of what he has lost, and will believe that it is lost to him for ever. These are the flames which consume him and the demons which torture him. They are moral sufferings as regards the sensations of the spirit, but are nevertheless material in some measure, through the material sufferings inherent in incarnation; and a retrograded spirit will feel them much more keenly, especially if he has been rejected, when he might have progressed, and been received into the peace of the Lord. But the paternal hand of the Lord is extended over these poor exiles, as over all others; and in the course of ages, peace will finally return to them with remorse for their obduracy, and the desire of reparation. This will be effected by the omnipotence of God, through the immutable law of progress and perfectibility which he has established from all eternity, and which operates under the auspices of his infinite justice, goodness, and mercy.

But the banished spirit will only remember his past in the errant state. When he is free from the trammels of the flesh, he will understand his position, and perceive his faults. He may delude himself for a time, but afterwards, without

his regarding anything as really or apparently arbitrary on the part of the Lord, his whole past will be displayed before his eyes ; and just as he can judge of the justice of his own condemnation, so will he also be able to appreciate the justice of the reward granted to the good labourers. Even in the state of incarnation, the retrograded spirit experiences an uneasiness which he cannot define, but which causes suffering to the man, and makes him feel superior to others around him, on account of the relative degradation of his own position.

(Verses 34 and 40.)—Jesus excludes the divinity falsely attributed to him by human interpretations, by declaring himself to be the brother of all men, the least of whom are all sons, like himself, of his Father, for he also is a created spirit, sprung from the same source and essence as themselves ; and at the same time, he gives himself the title of King, and thus indicates, under a veil which was to be raised by the present spiritual revelation, his position as the protector and ruler of your planet.

(Verses 35–45.)—Jesus came to your world to deliver you from errors, superstitions, and vices by bringing you light, and establishing the bases and foundations of human regeneration, and tracing out and opening up the paths and means of progress. When he was about to depart, after having warned men of the separation between the darnel and the good corn ; the good and the bad ; he told them plainly why men were to be separated as sheep and kids. It was not because they professed such and such a faith, or adopted such and such a doctrine, or practised such and such a form of external worship ; but some were placed on the right because they practised material, moral, and intellectual love and charity towards their brethren, while others were placed on the left for having neglected to do so.

Jesus does not speak of those who were not content with having done no good, but who had done positive evil. Their position was still more serious, and, as it is implied, there was no occasion to allude to it. Thus the clear and definite result of all the teachings of the Master is that you

should always endeavour to be charitable, and to make yourselves useful to your brethren in every possible manner. Everyone, whatever his material poverty, can always do some good amid the conditions in which he is placed, at least morally by his example, and by the teachings which may be found in the words of the Saviour, when rightly understood. It is this, "There is no salvation but in love and charity;" that is, there is no progress or advancement without. Whatever your opinions, doctrines, or outward religious rites and ceremonies, so long as you do not practise love and charity, you are necessarily in the bonds of pride and selfishness, and of the vices and passions which spring from them, and which degrade your humanity; and you still remain liable to expiation and expiatory incarnations on the inferior worlds.

The words of Jesus relate primarily to charity of spirit, and secondarily to the body, as the instrument of the incarnate spirit, and the agent of his trials, reparation, and progress. It is thus from the point of view of the necessities both of the body and of the spirit that you should practise love and charity towards your brethren.

MATTHEW, CHAP. XXVI.—VERSES 1-13. MARK,
CHAP. XIV.—VERSES 1-9.

Perfume Poured on the Head of Jesus.

Matth. xxvi. (1) And it came to pass that when Jesus had finished all these sayings, he said to his disciples, (2) You know that after two days is the Passover, and the Son of Man is betrayed to be crucified. (3) Then the chief priests and scribes and the elders of the people assembled together in the court of the chief priest, who was called Caiaphas. (4) And they consulted together that they might seize Jesus by treachery, and put him to death. (5) But they said, Not on the feast-day, lest there be a tumult among the people. (6) And while Jesus was at Bethany, in the house of Simon the leper, (7) A woman came to him having an alabaster box of very precious ointment, and poured it on his head as he was reclining. (8) And when his disciples saw it, they were indignant, saying, To what end is this waste? (9) For this ointment might have been sold for much, and given to the poor. (10) But Jesus perceiving it, said to them, Why trouble ye the woman? For she has wrought a good work in me. (11) For you have the poor always with you; but me ye have not always. (12) For she, having poured this ointment on my body, did it for my burial.

(13) Verily I say unto you that wherever this Gospel shall be preached in the whole world, this which she has done shall also be spoken of in memory of her.

Mark xiv. (1) And after two days was the Passover, and the feast of unleavened bread, and the chief priests and scribes sought to seize him by treachery, and put him to death. (2) But they said, Not on the feast-day, lest there should be a tumult among the people. (3) And while he was at Bethany, in the house of Simon the leper, as he was reclining, there came a woman having an alabaster box of ointment of spikenard, very precious; and she broke the box, and poured the ointment on his head. (4) And some were indignant in themselves, and said, (5) Why was this waste of the ointment, for it might have been sold for more than three hundred denarii, and given to the poor. And they grumbled at her. (6) And Jesus said, Let her alone; why do you trouble her? She has done a good work on me. (7) For you have the poor always with you, and whenever you will you can do them good; but me you have not always. (8) She hath done what she could; she came beforehand to anoint my body for the burial. (9) Verily I say unto you, Wheresoever this Gospel shall be preached in the whole world, this also which she hath done shall be spoken of in memory of her.

§ 280. Jesus again predicted his apparent death to his disciples, and in a more precise manner, by crucifixion. The act to which the woman was impelled by spirit-influence was designed to exhibit the fore-knowledge which Jesus possessed of his crucifixion and death, that when the event happened everyone might remember both this action and the words which he pronounced with reference to the future. The woman's action was as homage rendered to the Lord; but the disciples were still blinded by matter, and could only perceive the outward circumstances. When Jesus reproved their murmurs, he taught them that material sacrifices are not always sufficient, and that the spiritual side should also be regarded. Perfume was selected for this lesson on account of its ethereal nature, which made it more intelligible that sacrifices made from a spiritual point of view ought not to be regarded only from the material side; This action (on the part of the woman) arose from love and disinterestedness, and was a sign of the triumph of spirit over matter.

Jesus added, "You have the poor always with you, but me ye have not always;" and these words have not been understood in spirit and in truth. He alluded to his appearance on your earth in accordance with the necessities

of his earthly mission; and to the duration of his apparently human life. Those who interpret the words of Jesus from a human point of view, forgetful that he always ranked spiritual needs above all things, have falsely interpreted his words, "you have the poor always with you," by attributing to the Master a false, absurd, and ruinously retrograde doctrine, that material human poverty must always be the lot of your humanity on earth.

When Jesus spoke of the poor of the earth, he did not specially intend those who were deficient in worldly wealth, but all who are in any inferior position which requires the aid of benevolent men. His words apply to spirits who are comparatively inferior to others in intelligence; and thus not only to those who are materially poor, but more especially to those who are morally and intellectually poor. Yours is an inferior and progressive planet, and as with all others equally inferior, material and moral poverty is the result of trials. There will, therefore, always be those who are materially and morally poor, until the separation of the darnel from the good corn shall have been finished; that is, until the purification of your earth and its humanity shall have been wholly accomplished by the complete separation of the good and the wicked. But, as we have told you several times, the elevation of a planet does not imply equality of faculties. There will always be poor among you, even when material and moral poverty has ceased upon your planet. There will always be spirits who, although good and purified, are less advanced than others in various respects. These are intellectually poor; and those who are rich in intelligence and knowledge will richly impart to them of what they themselves possess. You must never forget that there will always be an intellectual hierarchy of spirits as regards universal knowledge, even when they have attained to moral perfection.

Material poverty will only cease among you with the cessation of all the moral infirmities which you must expiate by being continually re-born. Therefore rid yourselves of your vices, whether arising from the flesh, or from the spirit,

which should dominate matter ; for you may be prosperous to-day, and poor to-morrow. The entire disappearance of material poverty, so that every man may live richly on the results of his labour, is a dream, so long as your moral purification has not softened your future expiations. Your associations, your benevolent institutions, and your freely-given alms are good, for they show your desire to do good, and to relieve the sufferings of your brethren ; but without neglecting these material means, endeavour to improve the morality of men ; and you may say that material misery has ceased upon your planet, when moral misery has been driven from it. Then will all men be enlightened and banded together for mutual aid, and work in common for the common good ; but how far off is this blessed age on which you ought to enter ! Prepare yourselves for its realization, and use every effort for this end by means of organized association, directed by heartfelt humility, disinterestedness, justice, love, and charity, for work in the material, moral, and intellectual order. Let the rich give abundantly to the poor, by bringing the tribute of their faculties into these associations, to diffuse and develop moral and intellectual education and instruction, and to lead men to understand the love of God and of the neighbour. Let each be for all, and all for each, in all associations, whether commercial, industrial, agricultural, moral, or intellectual ; literary, religious, or scientific ; and in every sphere of human activity, whether individual, civil, or social.

MATTHEW, CHAP. XXVI.—VERSES 14-19. MARK,
CHAP. XIV.—VERSES 10-16. LUKE, CHAP. XXII.
VERSES 1-13.

Treachery of Judas.

Matth. xxvi. (14) Then went one of the twelve, who was called Judas Iscariot, to the chief priests, and said, (15) What will you give me and I will betray him to you ? And they agreed with him for thirty pieces of silver. (16) And after that, he sought an opportunity to betray him. (17) And on the first day of the feast of unleavened bread, the disciples came to Jesus, and said to him, How wilt thou that we should prepare for thee to eat the Passover ? (18) And he said, Go into the

city to such a one, and say to him, The Teacher says, My time is at hand; I will prepare the Passover at thy house with my disciples. (19) And the disciples did as Jesus had arranged, and they made ready the Passover.

Mark xiv. (10) And Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve, went to the high priests that he might betray him to them. (11) And when they heard it they rejoiced, and promised to give him money; and he sought how he could conveniently betray him. (12) And on the first day of the feast of unleavened bread, when they were sacrificing the Passover, his disciples say to him, Where wilt thou that we should go to prepare for thee to eat the Passover? (13) And he sent two of his disciples and said to them, Go into the city and a man shall meet you carrying a jar of water. (14) Follow him, and where he shall enter, say to the master of the house, The Teacher says, Where is the lodging where I am to eat the Passover with my disciples? (15) And he will show you a large upper room furnished; there make ready for us. (16) And his disciples set out, and came into the city, and found it as he had said to them, and they prepared the Passover.

Luke xxii. (1) And the feast of unleavened bread drew near, which is called the Passover. (2) And the chief priests and scribes sought how they might destroy him; for they feared the people. (3) And Satan entered into Judas Iscariot, being of the number of the twelve. (4) And he went out, and consulted with the chief priests and leaders how he might betray him to them. (5) And they were glad, and agreed to give him money. (6) And he consented, and sought for an opportunity to betray him to them in the absence of the people. (7) And the day of unleavened bread came, on which the Passover must be sacrificed. (8) And he sent Peter and John saying, Go and prepare the Passover for us, that we may eat it. (9) And they said to him, Where wilt thou that we shall prepare it? (10) And he said to them, Behold, as you are entering the city, a man shall meet you carrying a jar of water; follow him into the house where he shall enter. (11) And say to the master of the house, The Teacher says to thee, Where is the lodging where I shall eat the Passover with my disciples? (12) And he shall show you a large upper room furnished; there make ready. (13) And they went and found as he had said to them; and they made ready the Passover.

§ 281. The fulfilment of the predicted events was approaching; and Jesus sent Peter and John to a man whom he pointed out; and they met him, and everything came to pass as he had told them. We have already explained the prescience of Jesus (vol. ii. pp. 268 and 269). The Apostles had become used to such events, and paid no particular attention to them at the time; but at a later period they remembered all these predictions, which confirmed the prescience and mission of Jesus, both to themselves and to their disciples.

We must point out that the treason of Judas was not the result of predestination, which would amount to a denial of the justice of God, if you accept the ordinary interpretation

of this event. Judas was a spirit who was anxious to advance, but he was proud, and relied too much on his own strength. He had asked, in the spiritual state, to be allowed to take a share in the work of Christ, hoping for rich and abundant rewards. His guides vainly pointed out the obstacles which he would be unable to overcome; in vain they told him that he was still too weak to bear the weight of such a burden, and that the darkness of the flesh would hide from him both his resolutions and his hopes; and that his greedy and envious instincts would awaken, and would inevitably lead him to a fall which would be terrible in proportion to the obstinacy with which he had persisted in his determination; but he would listen to nothing.

Jesus knew Judas, and accepted his aid, and the terrible lesson which awaited him enabled him to arise finally purified from all the vices which he had retained. It was with a view to this end, which he foresaw, that Jesus permitted the action of Judas; for you may be well assured that nothing can happen without being directed by eternal justice and ineffable love.

Judas was proud, envious, and luxurious, and his poor and humble condition preyed upon him. He was blinded by the renown of Jesus, and could not forgive him for attracting so much attention. Pride, envy, and the love of luxury consequently drew him into avarice, hypocrisy, and theft.* O poor humanity, how much you still follow the example of Judas! How many are still pained by the reflection of the glory, renown, and esteem which shine upon others! How often you torture your spirit to find an opportunity to *sell* him who inspires you with envious feelings, the causes and consequences of which you do not even admit to yourselves! How many of you try to lower those of your brethren in public opinion, who appear to you to be unjustly elevated! With what artifice do you study the moment to seize upon them, and to deliver them over to the chief priests, Scribes, and Pharisees of your age, by treacherously

* See John xii. 6.

seeking out the faults and failings of those whom you wish to destroy, and laying them open before those who, like yourselves, are awaiting a favourable opportunity to injure them !

Ah, you would do better to employ your intelligence in discovering the means of hiding from all eyes the real or apparent faults of your brethren. Beware of acting like Judas, for you do not know how terrible is the expiation of him who sells the Just One, and betrays his Master. Say not, "This is not my case; for him whom I degrade in public opinion, and undermine secretly, and all whose faults I spy out in the shade, to display them openly in broad daylight before the eyes of all men, is not the Just One, and is not my Master." What do you know of this? Do you really know, proud Judas, when you yield to such base envy, whether he may not be your master in the sense that if you were in his place, you might sink lower? Brethren, distrust yourselves; all, without exception; for you are always liable to allow Satan, the demon of pride and envy, to enter your hearts; and you yield very easily to his suggestions. May the Lord protect you, for the fall is easy, and the recovery terrible !

You are told that the disciples did as Jesus had commanded; they found everything as he had told them, and they prepared all that was necessary for the Passover which Jesus was about to celebrate with Judas Iscariot, whom he knew was ready to betray him, as well as with the eleven faithful disciples. In our remarks on the following verses, we will explain the motives and object of the Passover in the Master's thought. He celebrated it with his disciples, not in a synagogue, or in a temple built by human hands for worship, but in a large furnished upper room, which was intended, under the empire and veil of the letter, to become the foundation of an outward religious rite. But in spirit and in truth, it was a purely symbolic and emblematic action

§ 282. What do you mean by saying that if the treason of Judas had been predestined, it would amount to a denial of the justice of God ?

According to the human interpretations of these events, Judas was delivered over to the devil beforehand, being created vile, base, envious, greedy, and sanguinary, for no other purpose but to commit this crime, in order to fulfil the prophesies of the Old Testament. How much plainer is the justice of God manifested in the fate of a presumptuous spirit who asked to co-operate in the great work, and who, notwithstanding all advice, persisted in the attempt, trusting more in his presumption than in the foresight of him who said to him through his guides, "You will fail." But even then the paternal hand is always held out to the disobedient child to raise him after the fall which has given rise to a salutary humility, which had not yet found room in his heart. O how great is that God who permits his guilty child to discover, even in his own unworthiness, the starting-point which shall lead him towards perfection ! Oh how merciful is He who is always ready to pardon a repentant sinner, and who binds up the sores of our guilty hearts with his own benevolent hands, sheds the balm of hope upon them, and heals them with the aid of expiation !

Blessed be thou, my God !

JUDAS ISCARIOT.

After this unexpected manifestation, we said to the spirit of Judas, "We thank you for manifesting yourself to us. You failed by asking for a mission above your strength, but God in his infinite goodness and mercy has permitted you to rise up again ; and you have now become one of the humble and devoted servants of Christ. May all learn from this encouraging lesson that however great may have been the sin of the creature, it is never so great as the mercy of God."

The hand of the medium was fluidically controlled, and instantly and spontaneously wrote as follows :—

The love of God is over all his creatures ; and you may well have confidence in him. It is not the innocent who need pardon ; and it is not the strong who need support. Come, ye children who weep over your faults ; the Lord will dry your tears. Come, sick and unhappy children ; the Lord will give you a larger share of his love. Come ye, in perfect trust ; for we, like you, have fallen ; we have mourned over our faults, and by long and painful labour, we have expiated

the crimes which we have committed, and the faults to which we yielded during the long series of existences which prepared and accomplished our purification ; and the Lord has permitted us to enter into his joy. Imitate us, then, dearly loved brethren ; for you have all more or less to expiate, and must all ask for mercy. Come to the feet of your Father in perfect confidence, and confess your faults at his tribunal. The Judge is just and equitable, but he is your Father, and his mercy is always in advance of his justice. His decrees are always within the limit of your strength ; he is a mild and patient creditor, and will wait until you are able to pay your debt. O come unto him, and may the hand which we extend towards you uphold you by showing you all the treasures of love which have been granted to us ! Even Judas is now a spirit who has been regenerated in the furnace of repentance, remorse, expiation, reincarnation, and progress ; and has become one of the humble, active, and devoted auxiliaries of Christ. Let this example show you that you should never repulse any of your brethren ; and still less exclude them from the peace of the Lord.

MATTHEW, MARK, LUKE, JOHN,
With the concurrence of the Apostles.

JOSEPH OF ARIMATHEA ; SIMON OF CYRENIA.

MATTHEW, CHAP. XXVI.—VERSES 20—30. MARK,
CHAP. XIV.—VERSES 17—26. LUKE, CHAP. XXII.
VERSES 14—23.

The Last Supper.

Matth. xxvi. (20) And when it was evening, he was reclining with the twelve, and while they were eating, he said to them, (21) Verily I say unto you that one of you shall betray me. (22) And they were exceedingly grieved, and each of them began to say to him, Lord, is it I? (23) And he answered and said, He who dippeth his hand with me into the dish, he shall betray me. (24) The Son of Man indeed goeth, as it is written of him, but woe unto that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed ! It were well for this man if he had not been born. (25) And Judas who betrayed him answered and said, Rabbi, is it I? And he says to him, Thou hast said. (26) And while they were

eating, Jesus took bread and having blessed it, broke it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat ; this is my body. (27) And taking the cup, he gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, (28) Drink ye all of it : for this is my blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many, for the remission of sins. (29) And I say unto you, Henceforth I will drink no more of this fruit of the vine until I shall drink it new with you in the kingdom of my Father. (30) And having sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

Mark xiv. (17) And when it was evening, he came with the twelve. (18) And when they were reclining and eating, Jesus said, Verily I say unto you that one of you who is eating with me shall betray me. (19) And they began to be sorrowful, and to say to him one after another, Is it I? and another, Is it I? (20) And he answered and said to them, It is one of the twelve who dippeth with me in the dish. (21) The Son of Man indeed goeth away, as it was written of him, but woe unto that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed? It were well for that man if he had not been born. (22) And while they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, Take, eat, this is my body. (23) And taking the cup, he gave thanks and gave it to them, and they all drank of it. (24) And he said to them, This is my blood of the new covenant which is poured out for many. (25) Verily I say unto you that I will drink no more of this fruit of the vine until that day when I shall drink it new in the kingdom of God. (26) And when they had sung a hymn, they went forth to the Mount of Olives.

Luke xxii. (14) And when the time was come, he rested, and the twelve Apostles with him. (15) And he said to them, I have desired with longing to eat this passover with you before I suffer. (16) For I say unto you that I will eat of it no more until the time when it shall be fulfilled in the kingdom of God. (17) And he took a cup, and having given thanks, he said, Take this, and divide it among yourselves. (18) For I say unto you that I will drink no more of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God shall come. (19) And taking bread, he gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them saying, This is my body which is given for you ; do this in remembrance of me. (20) Likewise also the cup after he had drunk, saying, This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you. (21) But lo, the hand of him who betrayeth me is with me in the dish. (22) And the Son of Man indeed goeth as it was appointed, but woe to that man by whom he is betrayed ! (23) And they began to inquire among themselves who then it might be of them who was about to do this.

§ 283. The meal which Jesus took with his disciples, and the communion to which he invites all men, ought not to raise any materialistic ideas in your minds. Jesus made a last solemn appeal to universal fraternity, by the emblems of bread and wine, which he compared to his body and to his blood. You are all seated at the same banquet, and should all partake of the same food, and drink of the same cup. The Lord has shown you the place which you ought to fill, and has pointed out the food which should sustain

you. Be united during your life, as the eleven faithful disciples gathered round the Master, and be animated by a common sentiment—love for the Father, love for the Saviour, and love for your brethren. You should all share equally in the same sacrifice ; and remember that the bread should be the same for all ; and that the beverage ought equally to refresh all who are weary, for the Saviour poured it out equally for all.

Act towards your wandering brethren, even the most perverse, as Jesus acted towards Judas. Although he knew that Judas was a false brother and deceitful disciple, Jesus admitted him to the same banquet as the eleven faithful disciples, to share the same food with them, and to drink of the same cup. He thus permitted him to hear his last appeal to universal brotherhood ; for Judas was the wandering sheep whom the Good Shepherd would lift on his shoulders afterwards to bring back to the fold. When Jesus was on the cross and about to leave the earth, he had only one word of pardon for Judas who had betrayed him, as well as for his revilers and executioners : “ Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.”

Judas, who had heard the Master's voice, and had not listened to it, was seized with remorse in this world, and driven to suicide ; but yet he found pardon after death by sincere and profound repentance, united with the ardent desire for expiation and reparation. After appropriate moral sufferings and tortures, he beheld the path of reincarnation, purification, and progress open before him. He was thus led, like others, through centuries of trials and expiations, by the infinite justice, goodness, and mercy of God, to come forth purified by humility, disinterestedness, and love. He thus regained his place at the banquet with the other disciples, and now joins with them in inviting all his wandering brethren to come, to sit with him at the table of his Master. Try to lead your wandering brethren back to the fold by meeting injury, insult, and treachery, with the gentleness, patience, and silence with which the Master treated Judas, and his revilers, and executioners. Let your

hearts and lips, like those of Jesus, feel and express only words of pardon for them ; and lead back the most perverse by perseveringly practising love and charity towards them. Do good to your enemies who hate you, and pray for those who persecute you or slander you ; and thus develope in them the feelings of what is true, just and good. Prepare them, under the influence of repentance, and the desire of reparation and progress, to come with you one day to take their places at the Feast of the Passover of universal brotherhood.

The bread and wine are merely emblematical, and Jesus never intended to give them a material application ; but yet what has been, was to be ; for matter is needful for matter. A mere commemoration would have been useless to men, and it was needful to impress them by leading them to regard themselves as tombs in which Christ came to bury himself daily (sepulchres whited externally, and generally very unworthy to serve as altars of propitiation !) But human intelligence is now ready to render to matter the things which belong to matter, and to spirit the things which belong to spirit, and to make the commemoration of the Passover its real end. Routine, blindness and obstinacy have upheld the old error ; but it is doomed.

You must understand that it is good for man to devote one day to this great commemoration. It is good that the memory of this great Example who stooped to you should assist in raising you to him from age to age, that the time may rapidly approach when you may meet him in the higher spheres, and still receive from his blessed hand the bread of life and the cup of eternity. It is good that man should thus make a solemn and profound appeal to him who watches unceasingly over your humanity ; asking him from the depths of an earnest heart, to give you the bread and wine which you should share with your brethren, by handing them the cup of benediction and giving them their share of the bread of life. Ask him who blessed the bread and wine to bless them once more before handing them to you. It will be well to devote the day of consecration to a yet

more solemn and earnest appeal to him who invites you to his table, by prayer, study, good works, and mutual instruction and exhortation. We need not explain every verse, for we have given you the main idea which prevails throughout. The variations in the narratives do not impugn the trustworthiness of the historians, whose accounts complete and explain each other. Every Evangelist has related the conversation which took place during the meal ; and Jesus, who repeated the same idea several times to fix it more deeply in the hearts of his disciples, did not always use the same words. Here, especially, you should never lose sight of the fact that Jesus used language appropriate to the intelligence and necessities of the age, in such a manner as to be useful for the present, and preparatory to the future ; for the reign of the letter was the means and condition of progress, and was to prepare humanity for the future of the Spirit, the preliminary signs of which are now beginning to shine from the East to the West.

The Passover is an emblem ; nothing more. It is the seal which Jesus set upon the teachings of his word ; it is the confirmation of the law of love and unity which should prevail among men. It is the culmination of the Master's teaching, and under this symbolic figure of the Passover, it is his last solemn appeal to the practice of the law of love and unity, and thus of universal brotherhood ; the only means of human regeneration, and the path of deliverance and freedom which will establish the kingdom of God upon your earth ; and thus, according to the ascending law of progress and universal harmony, make it the kingdom of your Father ; one of those splendid mansions in his house, which is infinite space, where only pure spirits dwell, and where all is love, unity, liberty and progress.

Jesus descended to his pupils to give them verbal instructions which should make an impression on them, by always connecting his lessons with the narratives and traditions of the Old Testament. He will only return when the seed which he has sown, and which has been growing for so many centuries, shall have shot forth branches laden with

fruit. You will then have attained to such a degree of development that he can manifest himself without needing to have recourse to a transitory incarnation like that which he assumed before, when he veiled his spiritual nature by a tangible fluidic body, relatively in harmony with your sphere, to make himself visible to men. All the words of Jesus are allegorical. He will return no more under the same conditions with men, and will only come when they are prepared to come to him. Jesus stooped to you, and now it is your duty to rise to him.

§ 284. You have said, "The bread and wine are only emblematical, and Jesus never intended to give them a material application; but what has been, was to be; for matter requires matter." What do these words mean?

You know that the first disciples of Jesus honoured the Master's last words, and assembled together to take a meal in common, in commemoration of the last meal which they had eaten with him. You have also heard of the scandalous scenes to which these meals led at a later period. Instead of the fraternity which ought to reign among all, pride took its place, and the rich man took his sumptuous repast near the poor man who looked on, to inspire him with envy. The cup was no longer one to touch all lips, nor the beverage one for all hearts. The cup was filled with fine wine and honey for some, while it was filled with gall and vinegar for others. It was needful for Christians to put an end to these abuses, and they instituted the Communion on the basis of bread and wine. It was still a meal, but a meal where the same bread was broken among all the faithful, and the same cup touched all lips. Later still, the difficulty and danger of meeting in numbers compelled the Christians to simplify the fraternal repast; and then they instituted the Communion which was given by the priest to the disciple who presented himself to receive it. It was always the same bread which was broken, and the same wine which was passed round; but at length they came to substitute the host for the bread, which was easier to preserve, and even to hide, when necessary. The priest only

was permitted to drink the cup, to avoid the delay and difficulty of providing wine for the Communion of the faithful. These successive alterations took place during the persecutions of the Christians at Rome. You can perceive their object; and the form of the outward act of commemoration is of little consequence when the spiritual act is performed with faith, for the purpose of approaching him who instituted it in thought and heart, with the ardent desire and firm resolve to make earnest and constant effort to walk in his steps.

Although the Master's words have been taken literally, which has led, notwithstanding his saying, "Do this in remembrance of me," to the human dogma of the Real Presence, and of Transubstantiation, yet this is because man always looks at the bark without thinking of the sap which is its life; and because he always wishes his own idea to prevail, without remembering that it is only a material form, for which he gives to a spiritual act, and that the form is of little consequence when the spirit is the same.

You, Spiritists, understand the Master's words in spirit and in truth, for we have already told you the meaning of the Passover, and how it should be celebrated. Celebrate it with prayer, not of the lips merely, but of the heart, and let it rest upon the actions of an upright and pure life before the Lord; be humble, active, and devoted towards your brethren in the great human family, and practise good works with sincerity, humility, and charity, according to the law of love, and combine them with study, mutual instruction, and exhortations to good. But you cannot break with all your old ideas by a single effort; and should therefore permit the temporary satisfaction to those Christians or Spiritists who seek for the spirit in the form. Do not break the yoke: at once, for those who have been accustomed to bear it would fly from you in consternation; but leave it to time, reason, love, and charity to open the hearts and intelligence of all, and to spiritualise all men. Thus we now say to all whom the Spirit has not yet entirely released from the letter, that he who believes that he ought to approach

the Master by this material act, ought to regard in it only the spiritual act. Men who practise Christian rites, be not ashamed to approach the Holy Table; for whatever may have been the profanations to which it has been exposed, you can always sanctify it by the feeling which brings you to it. Do not regard the priest, or the outward form of the ceremony, but raise your souls to God; look on the virtues practised by the Master, listen to his voice which still preaches to you his sweet morality, and look on the luminous path which he has opened before you, and enlightened for his followers. Whatever the form, look only at the object; whatever the hand which offers you the bread, look only to Jesus, who says, "Do this in remembrance of me."

Spiritists, who still seek for the spirit in the form, and feel comfort in approaching Jesus by a material act of commemoration; remember that he took the meal with his disciples as a symbol of the law of love, unity, and fraternity, amongst all. You may fearlessly perform this material act, the outward form of which conceals the spiritual thought. But unless you are animated by the feelings which are implied in this spiritual repast, abstain from it, for it would be hypocrisy.

Christians of all parties, Greeks, Romans, or Protestants, fulfil this outward act of commemoration, if the need of your heart, or even the habits of your childhood, impel you; but never accomplish it with regard to men or their opinions. Never tamper with your conscience; submit to be blamed unjustly, if needful; but let your actions be pure, and guided by truth and love. Away with that hypocrisy which bows before God for men to behold it! Away with the laxity which pays more attention to the regard of men than to peace of conscience, and is more afraid of the blame of men than the blame of its own conscience!

LUKE, CHAP. XXII.—VERSES 24-30.

Pride, Ambition, and Domination Forbidden.

(24) And there was also rivalry among them, which of them should be thought greater. (25) And he said to them, The kings of the nations

lord it over them, and those who have authority over them are called their benefactors. (26) But it shall not be thus among you, but the greater among you shall be as the younger, and the leader as he who serves. (27) For who is greater, he who reclines or the attendant? Is not he who reclines? But I am in the midst of you like an attendant. (28) And you are those who have remained with me in my trials. (29) And I have arranged for you as my Father has appointed me a kingdom. (30) That you shall eat and drink at my table in my kingdom. And you shall sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

§ 285. No one will be excluded or rejected, but no one ought to think more of himself than of his brethren, or to aspire to a higher place.

(Verse 24.)—The debate which arose among the disciples as to which of them should be the greater resembles the request of the sons of Zebedee and their mother, which excited the indignation of the other Apostles. Jesus replied then by giving them a lesson which is essentially the same as that which he repeated on the present occasion, except that it was differently expressed. Such debates were not unfrequent among the Apostles, who, notwithstanding their mission, were under the dominion of the flesh, and liable to its weaknesses.

(Verses 25–27.)—These verses are explained by what we have already said; but we may repeat that the reply of Jesus is a short and simple lesson urging men to humility, disinterestedness and self-renunciation. Pride and ambition erect a barrier between man and God, like everything which infringes the law of love, charity and fraternity.

(Verses 28–30.)—The expression “trials” is not to be taken literally. According to the spirit which is veiled by the letter, it means, as regards Jesus, trials and tribulations to which any other nature but his own would have succumbed. From a human point of view, the insults and persecutions of his enemies were assuredly tribulations and trials to him. You must remember that Jesus was speaking to his disciples, and in speaking of trials, he designed to strike a blow at the supposed divinity which would afterwards be ascribed to him by men.

(Verses 28, 29.)—The faithful Apostles were advanced

spirits, but were not yet perfect. Jesus brought men the means of progress, just as God had granted to Jesus and all other spirits the means of success. And like other spirits who had always persevered in well-doing, Jesus himself had been aided by the superior spirits who were entrusted with his development. Thus, too, the Apostles would be led to attain that perfection to which they aspired, and to obtain which they exerted all their efforts.

Jesus is the protecting and ruling spirit of your planet, and has sole charge of your progress. He is preparing the kingdom for you as well as for the Apostles, and **causes** you to be aided by relatively superior spirits suited to your development, who guide you to that perfection to which you aspire. Use every effort to succeed, and when you have attained it, we shall all be united as active and devoted servants of the Father, and shall break the spiritual bread, and drink of the cup of eternal life together.

(Verse 30.) For an explanation of this verse, we refer you to what we have already said (vol. ii. pp. 249-251, § 237).

MATTHEW, CHAP. XXVI.—VERSES 31-35. MARK,
CHAP. XIV.—VERSES 27-31. LUKE, CHAP. XXII.
VERSES 31-38.

Predictions of Jesus.

Matth. xxvi. (31) Then Jesus says to them, All of you shall be offended on account of me this night, for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered. (32) But after I am risen, I will go before you into Galilee. (33) And Peter answered and said to him, Although all should be offended in thee, I will never be offended. (34) And Jesus said to him, Verily I say to thee, that in this night, before the cock shall crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. (35) And Peter saith unto him, And if I should die with thee, yet I will not deny thee. And all the disciples said the same.

Mark xiv. (27) And Jesus says to them, You shall all be offended in me this night, for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered. (28) But after I am risen again, I will go before you into Galilee. (29) And Peter said to him, And if all should be offended, yet will not I. (30) And Jesus says to him, Verily I say unto thee that on this very night, before the cock shall crow twice, thou shalt deny me thrice. (31) But he spoke more vehemently, If I must die with thee, I will not deny thee. And thus said they all.

Luke xxii. (31) And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold Satan has

demanding you, to winnow you like wheat. (32) But I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not, and when thou art converted, confirm thy brethren. (33) And he said to him, Lord, I am ready to follow thee to prison and to death. (34) And he said, I tell thee, Peter, that the cock shall not crow this day before thou shalt thrice deny that thou knowest me. (35) And he said to them, When I sent you without purse, and wallet, and sandals, lacked ye anything? And they said, Nothing. (36) Then he said to them, But now let him who has a purse, take it, and in like manner his wallet, and let him who hath no sword, sell his garment, and buy one. (37) For I say to you that this which is written must be accomplished in me, And he was numbered with the transgressors; for also that which is written about me hath an end. (38) And they said, Lord, behold here are two swords. And he said to them, It is enough.

§ 286. Jesus made his disciples understand beforehand how weak is the human will, and how little man ought to rely on his own strength. When he said to Peter, "I have prayed for thee," he showed all that the only support on which man can rely is prayer; but none of them understood him at the time, for not one prepared himself for the storm by prayer, and they all failed at the moment of danger. The incident was a lesson for the future.

Some special explanations are needful.

(Luke xxii. 31.)—Jesus alluded to the influence which the dread of possible future events had upon Peter, and to the evil thoughts which arose in his mind, which sometimes led him to regret the course on which he had entered. These were passing thoughts, and scarcely assumed any tangible shape; but they were visible to the eye of the Master. Peter knew that some great peril was impending over his Master and themselves; and human weakness sometimes led to a vague regret in his mind that he was thus exposed to danger.

(Luke xxii. 35, 36.)—These words were designed to warn the disciples of the events which were about to take place, and that the time was near. The wallet, purse, and sword were designed to show them that they had entered upon their course, and must arm themselves to be ready to meet attacks. You can see that the words of Jesus are still symbolical, for when Peter made use of his weapon, he said, "Put up thy sword into the sheath, for whoever taketh up the sword shall perish by the sword." This proves that Jesus

was speaking figuratively to his disciples, who did not understand him immediately.

He said to them, according to the Spirit, "The time is approaching when you must wander over the earth. Travellers, take care not to be found unprovided for your journey; lay aside all human passions, and every idea and thought of material interest; and never seek to make the way to heaven a means of obtaining wordly objects. You know the goal of your journey; take every precaution to provide yourselves with everything indispensable for success. You will be attacked, and must arm yourselves for defence; but the only weapons which you should use are love and charity."

The words of Jesus include a lesson for the future as well as for the present. All who endeavour to follow the steps of the Master, and to imitate his faithful disciples in the apostleship of the new era, are apostles, and must arm themselves like the Apostles of Christ.

(Luke xxii. 37, 38.)—"It is enough." It must be that the material events shall be fulfilled; the swords were only to form the subject of a lesson, and if there was only one, it was enough. As the Apostles did not comprehend the figurative meaning of the words of Jesus, the coming events opened their understanding by one more lesson, which showed them an example of charity, patience, and power, by what passed at the arrest of Jesus, when Peter wounded Malchas, and Jesus healed him.

MATTHEW, CHAP. XXVI.—VERSES 36–46. MARK,
CHAP. XIV.—VERSES 32–42. LUKE, CHAP. XXII.
VERSES 39–46.

Jesus at the Garden of Gethsemane.

Matth. xxvi. (36) Then Jesus cometh with them into a place called Gethsemane, and saith to the disciples, Sit down here, while I go and pray yonder. (37) And he took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be sorrowful and troubled. (38) Then he saith to them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death; remain here and watch with me. (39) And going forwards a little way, he fell on his face, and prayed and said, My Father, if it be possible, let this cup

pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt. (40) And he cometh to the disciples, and findeth them sleeping, and saith to Peter, What, could ye not watch with me one hour? (41) Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation. The spirit indeed is zealous, but the flesh is weak. (42) Again the second time he went away, and prayed, saying, My Father, if it is impossible that this cup should pass from me, except I drink it, thy will be done. (43) And he cometh, and findeth them sleeping again, for their eyes were weighed down. (44) And he left them, and went away again, and prayed a third time, repeating the same words. (45) Then he cometh to his disciples, and saith to them, Sleep on now, and take your rest; behold the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. (46) Rise up: and let us go; behold he who betrayeth me is at hand.

Mark xiv. (32) And he cometh to a place called Gethsemane, and saith to his disciples, Sit here while I shall pray. (33) And he taketh with him Peter and James and John, and began to be amazed and troubled. (34) And he saith to them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful unto death; remain here and watch. (35) And going forward a little way, he fell on the earth, and prayed that if it were possible, the hour might pass from him. (36) And he said, Abba, Father, all powers are thine; let this cup pass from me; but not what I will, but what thou wilt. (37) And he cometh and findeth them sleeping, and saith to Peter, Simon, art thou asleep? couldst thou not watch one hour? (38) Watch and pray that ye enter not into temptation; the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak. (39) And again he went away and prayed, saying the same words, and coming back, he found them sleeping again. (40) For their eyes were weighed down, and they were unable to answer him anything. (41) And he cometh the third time and saith to them, Sleep on now, and take your rest; it is enough; the hour is come, behold the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. (42) Rise up, and let us go; behold, he who betrayeth me is at hand.

Luke xxii. (39) And he came out, and went as he was accustomed to the Mount of Olives, and his disciples also followed him. (40) And when they were come to the place, he said to them, Pray that ye enter not into temptation. (41) And he departed from them about a stone's throw, and knelt down and prayed, and said, (42) Father, if thou wilt, remove this cup from me; nevertheless, not my will, but thine be done. (43) And there appeared to him an angel from heaven strengthening him. (44) And being in agony, he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was like clots of blood falling on the ground. (45) And rising up after praying, he came to his disciples, and found them sleeping for sorrow, and he said to them, (46) Why do ye sleep? Rise up and pray, that ye enter not into temptation.

§ 287. Jesus descended to teach men to live and die, with regard to the progress of the spirit. All his words and actions were directed to this end. After having taught his disciples how to live, he went to Gethsemane, on the Mount of Olives, to teach them to die. Everything took place solely as a lesson and example to men; and you can understand this if you remember what you have been told of the nature and origin of Jesus. You can understand the neces-

sity for these events, if you remember that men were still to believe that Jesus had a human origin, like yours. Both the events and words were necessarily appropriate to this belief. All the words and actions of the Master were linked together during his earthly mission, to serve the present, and prepare for the future, and to lead humanity on, in the course of ages, towards the New Revelation.

(Matth. xxvi. 36, 37 ; Mark xiv. 32-34 ; Luke xxii. 39.)—Jesus took the same three disciples with him (Peter, James and John) whom he had already taken to witness the Transfiguration on Mount Tabor, and the appearance of Moses and Elijah, because their physical constitutions were more favourable than those of any of the other Apostles to render them aptly medianimic to the spirit-manifestation which was about to take place ; and especially to the appearance of the angel.

Jesus said, " My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death." These words were designed to make the three disciples, and subsequently all men, understand that he had a presentiment of what was about to take place, and that he sought for strength in God.

" Remain here," for you must witness whatever may take place. " Watch with me ;" for you must relate what you see and hear, and transmit the record to future generations, to be explained and understood according to the human interpretations appropriate to the intelligence and needs of every age ; firstly, according to the letter, and then, at the time predicted, according to the Spirit.

(Matth. xxvi. 39-44 ; Mark xiv. 35-40 ; Luke xxii. 40-42.)—These words and acts of Jesus were a lesson and example to the Apostles, and to those who should become their disciples, to show them the submission from which they should never depart, even under the greatest sufferings, and the faith and resignation which they should never abandon, however great their trials ; as well as the vigilance which they ought constantly to exert over themselves that they may never fail ; and the efficacy of that powerful cordial of the soul—prayer.

“ Watch and pray,” said Jesus to the three disciples, “ lest you fall into temptation and yield ; the spirit, indeed, is willing, but the flesh is weak.” The spirit is quick to imagine either good or evil, but the flesh is weak, and the spirit cannot rule it.

The three disciples were not asleep, as you understand the term. It was a physical, but not a moral sleep ; the spirit remained subject to the body, and perceived its sensations. They were in a state of outward torpor which produced all the appearance of sleep, but which yet permitted them to view, as through a veil, the events which were passing around them, and to hear what was spoken. In such a state, the body sleeps, but the spirit, which is not disengaged, perceives with organs which are clogged with matter, and the effects produced on the brain resemble those of a dream.

In the case of Peter, James, and John, this condition was the result of fatigue and watching. Have you not yourselves sometimes passed into a similar state, like that which we have just described ?

The three disciples were not asleep ; they saw and heard what passed ; but when Jesus approached, their eyes were weighed down under magnetic influence, to give occasion for the advice which he desired to give them. Jesus approached them three times, and spoke the same words to fix them more firmly on their minds and memory, for his words were to be related and recorded by the Evangelists, for the instruction of all future generations of men.

(Luke xxii. 43.)—Can those who believe in the divinity of Jesus Christ believe that God had need of support, and that his strength was insufficient in itself ? On the other hand, can those who deny spirit-manifestations, and regard Jesus as a man like themselves, and clothed with a robe of flesh like their own, admit that an angel of the Lord appeared to the eyes of the man Jesus, and to the eyes of the three Apostles ? Those who deny spirit-manifestations cannot admit this ; and must therefore regard Jesus as an impostor, if he related it to the disciples ; but if not (for there is no proof that he mentioned it to them), then it was

the disciples themselves who invented this manifestation of the angel ; and for what purpose should they, at the very moment when they were endeavouring to establish the divinity of one in whom they could not possibly have believed, if we accept the views of these critics ?

Those who believe in spirit-manifestations, and who suppose that Jesus was a man like themselves, can admit that all the events recorded of him may have taken place, but would make his birth an entirely human event. But in that case, the revelations made by the angel to Mary and Joseph are false ! If Jesus sprung from a human union, the mystery which surrounded his birth would be a lie ; and if we admit that this event is false, we should be forced to admit the possibility of the falsity of the whole history. Let the Spiritist reflect on the consequences of this, and consider the disadvantage at which he would be placed towards those who deny spirit-manifestations, and declare the Gospels to be fabulous, only retaining, according to their own caprice, what it suits their incredulity to admit. But the New Revelation sets the Spirit in the place of the letter, and explains the origin and nature of Jesus in spirit and in truth, and the manner of his appearance on the earth.

He is a spirit of perfect and immaculate purity, the protector and ruler of your planet, and the greatest essence next to God, as regards your earth ; but not the only one who has arrived at an equal elevation in space, and in the hierarchy of worlds and spirits. He was only clothed with a perispritic body, which left him perfect consciousness of his origin, the independence and liberty of his spirit, the full knowledge of his mission and power, and the certainty of the future. Could Jesus, who was always a spirit, require any other support but in the Lord himself ; and did not his own devotion raise him above every human weakness ? You may therefore admit that Jesus, who was above all human terrors, designed to set men an example of submission under the greatest sufferings, and you will find that men have profited by his example ; for you see martyrs going to the torture without even passing through the moral agony of which the disciples spoke with reference to Jesus,

and which, though they took it for a reality, was only an appearance and a lesson. You should never forget that Jesus always placed before the eyes of men practical illustrations of the morality which he preached. Whatever envelope men attribute to Jesus, yet let them admire his spirit. Spiritists, be not disunited; and other men, whoever you are, who are not yet prepared to accept the light of the New Revelation, abandon the fragments of the vase, but carefully collect the perfume which it contained; for those who inhale it inhale eternal life.

The appearance of the angel also took place as a lesson and example to men, to demonstrate that God always upholds those who appeal to him with faith and resignation, and sends them the strength which they require. It also teaches them that whatever trials and sufferings may be reserved for them, they will always find the strength they need in the support which they derive from the Lord.

The appearance of the angel became visible to the three disciples by their clairvoyance. It would not have been visible to them all; and this is the reason that Jesus took with him Peter and James and John, who were best fitted to see the vision.

(Luke xxii. 44.)—The bloody sweat was a fluidic effect, medianimically visible to the three disciples, like the vision of the angel. It was emblematic of the blood which Jesus foresaw would be shed in his name. There is nothing extraordinary in this manifestation to those who are initiated in spiritual science, and the history of spirit-manifestations; for these are authentic records of analogous phenomena, which might be repeated in your own days, to the eyes of seeing mediums. These fluidic effects on the part of the spirits, have analogous effects on the part of incarnate spirits who undergo human incarnation like yourselves. These are material phenomena, which your human science has recognised as a pathological condition. Many instances are recorded in your medical annals; and you may specially call to mind the historic narrative of the two young girls called the Stigmatics of the Tyrol.

We must again remind you that everything that took place was intended solely as a lesson and example to men. What did Jesus do? Was he praying alone? Was his prayer a prayer of the lips, or of the thought only? No (and this is one remark which even those who deny the events have overlooked); he took with him three of his disciples, and went forward a little, but not out of sight and hearing. He fell on his face, and expressed aloud his thoughts, his sufferings, and his submission. Blind men, do you not yet understand that Jesus, who set you an example how to live, also set you an example how to die, by showing his disciples how man should bow to the will of his Lord, and master his own will, no matter what agonies he may suffer?

“His disciples were asleep.” Do you not yet perceive that this “sleep,” which permitted them to observe all the words and actions of the Master, was a lesson?

O dearly beloved Master, blessed Model, how sweet have been thy examples, and how strengthening thy word! Who can say that there was a second of thy passage on earth which was not devoted to the instruction of mankind both by word and example! Gentle Master of morality, still teach these ungrateful ones to prostrate themselves before the Lord, and still let fall from thy blessed lips the words of submission and devotion which they should repeat!

Disciples, who follow the Master, and listen to his voice, beware of allowing yourselves to be overcome with sleep, for the time is approaching, and you should always watch and pray to keep yourselves on your guard against your visible and invisible enemies; the vices of humanity, evil advice and temptations, and secret evil influences. Guard yourselves against yourselves by constant watchfulness over your thoughts, words, and actions, and you will then have nothing to fear from others, whether incarnate or errant.

Jesus set an example to men until the last moment. If he had not seemed to the eyes of his disciples to suffer the agonies which man suffers when face to face with death, the gratitude of mankind would not have been the same. Men did not understand then, and do not yet generally under-

stand, that his apparent physical sufferings and trials were not the same as yours. Had they supposed so, they would have said (and you yourselves would have said the same, if you had not been enlightened by the New Revelation as to "who is the Son," and the purely spiritual nature of his mission). "It was easy for him to devote himself to torture and death, for his nature rendered him superior to the sufferings which overwhelm us."

But although material sufferings could not touch him, yet he experienced moral sufferings, and regret at foreseeing a future which should be so unproductive to men. He beheld the blood which men would shed in his name; and this blood appeared to the eyes of the disciples, and made them perceive that when a man is moved by trust and love to raise his heart towards the Lord, and to ask for strength to bear his trials, the Lord sends messengers who bring him the hope and consolation which he needs. And did not he who was a spirit of perfect and immaculate purity, above and beyond your humanity, fulfil a superior mission for the progress of men, moved solely by love and devotion, amid moral sufferings, when he stooped to you?

(Matth. xxvi. 45, 46; Mark xiv. 41, 42; Luke xxii. 45, 46.)—"It is enough," said Jesus to his disciples. The lesson was given to the Apostles and their followers, that all men might profit by them. "The hour is come; rise, and let us go;" for the outward events must be accomplished.

MATTHEW, CHAP. XXVI.—VERSES 47-56. MARK,
CHAP. XIV.—VERSES 43-52. LUKE, CHAP. XXII.

VERSES 47-53.

Arrest of Jesus.

Matth. xxvi. (47) And while he was speaking, behold Judas, one of the twelve, came, and with him a large crowd with swords and cudgels, from the high priests and elders of the people. (48) And he who betrayed him gave them a sign, saying, Whomsoever I shall kiss, he it is, seize upon him. (49) And immediately coming to Jesus, he said, Hail, Rabbi, and kissed him. (50) And Jesus said to him, Comrade, wherefore art thou here? Then they came up to him, and laid their hands on Jesus, and seized him. (51) And behold one of those with Jesus stretched out his hand, and drew his sword, and struck the servant of

the high priest, and cut off his ear. (52) Then Jesus says to him, Return thy sword into its place, for all those who take the sword shall perish by the sword. (53) Thinkest thou that I am not now able to pray to my Father, and he shall send me more than twelve legions of angels? (54) But how should the writings be fulfilled that thus it must be? (55) In that hour, Jesus said to the multitudes, Do you come out with swords and cudgels as against a thief, to take me? I sat with you daily in the Temple, teaching, and you did not seize me. (56) But all this has come to pass that the writings of the prophets should be fulfilled. Then all the disciples forsook him, and fled.

Mark xiv. (43) And immediately, while he was speaking, came Judas, one of the twelve, and with him a large crowd with swords and cudgels, from the chief priests and scribes and elders. (44) And he who betrayed him had given them a signal, saying, Whomsoever I shall kiss, he it is; seize him, and lead him away securely. (45) And when he came, he went up to him immediately, and said, Rabbi, Rabbi, and kissed him. (46) And they laid their hands upon him, and seized him. (47) And a certain man among the bystanders drew his sword, and struck the servant of the high priest, and cut off his ear. (48) And Jesus answered and said to them, Are you come out with swords and cudgels, as against a thief, to take me? (49) I was with you daily in the Temple, teaching, and you did not seize me; but it is that the writings may be fulfilled. (50) And they all left him, and fled. (51) And a certain young man followed him, having thrown a linen cloth around his naked body. And the young men seized him, (52) And he left the linen cloth behind, and fled from them naked.

Luke xxii. (47) And while he was speaking, lo, a multitude, and he who was called Judas, one of the twelve, went before them, and drew near to Jesus, and kissed him. (48) And Jesus said to him, Judas, betrayest thou the Son of Man with a kiss? (49) But those around him seeing what would happen, said to him, Lord, shall we strike with the sword? (50) And a certain one among them struck the servant of the high priest, and cut off his right ear. (51) And Jesus answered and said, Suffer ye thus far. And he touched his ear, and healed him. (52) Then Jesus said to the high priests and generals of the Temple, and elders who had come against him, Have you come out as against a thief with swords and cudgels? (53) When I was daily with you in the Temple, you did not stretch out your hands upon me. But this is your hour, and the power of darkness.

§ 288. These events belong to history, and need no commentary. Here as elsewhere you must always remember that the four Gospel narratives (comp. John xviii. 1-12) complete and explain each other. By placing the various narratives together, you obtain the following complete account of the events, in the order in which they happened.

Judas came up to Jesus and said, Hail, Rabbi, and kissed him. Jesus answered, Comrade, wherefore art thou come? While he was speaking, those who followed Judas advanced, and Jesus met them saying, "What seek

you here?" They answered, "Jesus of Nazareth;" and Jesus said, "I am he." They recoiled, and fell to the ground; and he asked them again, "What seek ye?" and they said, "Jesus of Nazareth." Jesus answered, "I have told you that I am he; and if you seek me, let these go." Then he addressed Judas, saying, "Judas, dost thou betray the Son of Man with a kiss?"

Those who were with Jesus, seeing what was about to happen, said, "Lord, shall we strike with the sword?" Then Simon Peter put his hand to his sword, and drew it, and struck one of the servants of the high priest named Malchas, and cut off his right ear; but Jesus said to Peter, "Put up thy sword into its sheath; for all they that take up the sword shall perish by the sword; suffer ye thus far;" and he touched the man's ear, and healed him. He then said, "Think ye not that I could even now pray to my Father, and he would send me immediately more than twelve legions of angels? But shall I not drink the cup which my Father has given me? And how then should the writings be fulfilled, which say that thus it must be?" Then, addressing himself to the party sent by the Jews, to the chief priests, the captains of the Temple, and the elders who had come to take him, he said, "Are you come here armed with swords and clubs to take me as if I were a robber? I was daily with you in the temple, teaching, and sitting among you; but you did not seize me then. But the writings must needs be fulfilled; and this is your hour, and the power of darkness." Then the soldiers and their leaders and the people sent by the Jews, seized Jesus, and led him away; but all this was done that what was written by the prophets should be fulfilled. Then all the disciples of Jesus forsook him and fled, but there was one young man who followed him, clothed only with a linen cloth; and when the soldiers attempted to seize him, he left the cloth, and fled from them naked.

Remember that Jesus seemed to men to be a man like themselves, and that he was to permit them to suppose so; and you will then understand the object of the words which he spoke to Judas and to those who followed him.

John wrote under spirit-influence (xviii. 4) that Jesus "knew all that was about to happen to him," because the revelation of the angel to Mary and Joseph had been divulged at the time when John wrote ; and the human belief in the "divinity" of Jesus had already taken root in the minds of men.

The circumstances attending the arrest of Jesus, the wound, and healing of Malchas, and the words which Jesus addressed to Judas, Peter, and the followers of Judas, were designed as an example of charity, forbearance, and power. The repulse and fall of those who first advanced to lay hands on Jesus was caused by the fluidic action of the spirits around the Master. There have been instances of such effects in all ages, even in your own, especially when a subjugated man is thrown to the ground by the obsessing spirits. Among a number of men, you will always find some organizations which can be rendered medianimically sensitive ; but the superior spirits have no occasion to resort to these methods, and can condense the needful fluids without the aid of animalized fluids drawn from incarnate spirits.

You are told that Jesus touched the ear of Malchas, and healed him. The ear had not been entirely cut off, and had not fallen down ; Jesus healed him by checking the flow of blood by magnetic action. Certain magnetic fluids can check the circulation of the blood, direct it, or increase it. This result may be obtained by human as well as spiritual magnetism, when the magnetizer is aided by beneficent spirits. These are facts which will be studied and applied when the period of voluntary ignorance has ceased.*

The words addressed to Peter, "Put up thy sword into its sheath, for all those who take up the sword shall perish by the sword," were a lesson to the Apostles, their disciples, to those who professed to be, or should become their successors, and generally to all men, at all periods. Jesus thus showed them that they must never defend the moral doctrine personified in himself by violence and material

* Compare Brittan's "Man and his Relations," pp. 258 and 259.—
TRANSL.

weapons, no matter what might be the result of the attacks, or what their assailants might do. The only weapons which should be employed must be always and everywhere purely moral ; patience, gentleness, persuasion, love, and charity. Those who have made use of material weapons have misunderstood the lessons, examples, and commands of the Master, and will be punished by the law of retaliation. These words were also a warning to those who should call themselves or make themselves the leaders of the Church of Christ, that they should never make it a kingdom of this world, using material weapons as instruments of human justice, or to defend themselves against attacks from without.

The words of Jesus to the chief priests and elders, "I was sitting with you daily in the Temple teaching, and you did not arrest me ; but this is your hour, and the hour of darkness," have no fatalistic character, as regards those to whom they were addressed. On the contrary, they imply the free use of free will, and express the liberty of success which was now permitted them ; whereas hitherto their attempts had been frustrated.

Nor was the presence of the young man with the linen cloth without an object. Previous to his incarnation, he had accepted the mission of serving as the instrument of the lesson which would result from his presence. Under the inspiration of his guardian angel, he joined the followers of Jesus, clothed only with a cloth, at the time of the arrest ; and the attendants seized him to lead him to the prætor. Everything that took place was accomplished under spirit influence.

The young man who followed Jesus is the emblem of the old law, which carried with it the emblem of death. It was stopped in its course, laid aside its insignia, and found itself as the Lord had made it. You should all, like this young man, leave your linen cloth in the hands of the unbelievers who seek to stay you. Lay aside the insignia of death ; you are enveloped in fraud, malice, and vices. It is as a shroud which enwraps you, for you are all dead bodies in the sight of God. Leave this funeral covering in the hands

of those who try to stop your advance in the path of moral progress. Appear before the Lord clothed only with a pure heart, such as he has given you ; follow Christ on his own way to the Prætorium, and cast aside on the road the vices which have brought him there. It is your crimes, transgressions, and faults which strike and scourge him ; it is your breaches of the law of justice, love, and charity which insults him. Follow Jesus by walking in the paths that he mapped out for you during his earthly mission ; and you will alleviate the moral sufferings which you caused him during his passage through the world, by showing him the fruit which has sprung from his labours.

MATTHEW, CHAP. XXVI.—VERSES 57–68. MARK,
CHAP. XIV.—VERSES 53–65. LUKE, CHAP. XXII.
VERSES 54, 55, 63–71.

Jesus before Caiaphas.

Matth. xxvi. (57) And those who had seized Jesus, led him away to the house of Caiaphas the High Priest, where the scribes and elders were assembled. (58) And Peter followed him at a long distance into the courtyard of the High Priest, and coming in, he sat down among the attendants, to see the end. (59) And the chief priests and elders and the whole Sanhedrim sought for false witness against Jesus, that they might put him to death, and found none. (60) And although many false witnesses came forward, they found none. And at last two false witnesses came forward, and said, (61) This man said, I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to build it up within three days. (62) And the High Priest stood up, and said to him, Answerest thou nothing ? What do these men witness against thee ? (63) And Jesus was silent, and the High Priest answered and said to him, I abjure thee by the Living God to tell us whether thou art the Christ, the Son of God. (64) And Jesus said to him, Thou hast said it. But I say unto you that from henceforward you shall see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven. (65) Then the High Priest rent his garments, saying, He has blasphemed : what further need have we of witnesses ; lo, now you have heard his blasphemy. What think ye ? (66) And they answered and said, He is worthy of death. (67) Then they spat in his face, and cuffed him. (68) And they struck him, saying, Prophecy to us, Christ, who it is that struck you ?

Mark xiv. (53) And they led Jesus away to the house of the High Priest, and all the chief priests, elders and scribes were assembled with him. (54) And Peter followed him from a distance to the court of the High Priest, and was sitting with the attendants, and warmed himself in the fire light. (55) And the chief priests and the whole Sanhedrim sought for evidence against Jesus, that they might condemn him to

death ; and they found none. (56) For many bore false witness against him, and their evidence did not agree. (57) And certain men stood up, and bore false witness against him, saying, (58) We heard him say, I will destroy this temple, which was made with hands, and within three days, I will build another not made with hands. (59) And neither thus was their testimony alike. (60) And the High Priest rose up in the midst, and questioned Jesus, saying, answerest thou nothing? What do these witness against thee? (61) And he was silent, and answered him nothing. And the High Priest asked him again, and said to him, Art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed? (62) And Jesus said, I am ; and you shall see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming with the clouds of heaven. (63) And the Chief Priest rent his robe, saying, What further need have we of witnesses? You have heard the blasphemy ; what does it appear to you. (64) And they all condemned him as deserving of death. (65) And some began to spit upon him, and to cover his face, and to cuff him, and to say to him, Prophecy ; and the attendants slapped him.

Luke xxii. (54) And they took him and led him away, and brought him into the house of the High Priest ; and Peter followed afar off. (55) And they lit a fire in the middle of the court, and sat there together, and Peter sat in the midst of them. (63) And the men who were assembled round Jesus, struck him and beat him. (64) And having blindfolded him, they struck him in the face, and asked him, saying, Prophecy, who it is who struck you. (65) And they said many other things, blaspheming against him. (66) And when it was day, the elders of the people and the chief priests and scribes assembled together, and led him away to their Sanhedrim, saying, If thou art the Christ tell us. (67) And he said to them, If I tell you you will not believe. (68) And also if I should ask, you would neither answer me nor release me. (69) From henceforth shall the Son of Man be seated on the right hand of the power of God. (70) And they all said, Art thou then the Son of God? And he said to them, You say that I am. (71) And they said, What further need have we of evidence? For we ourselves have heard it from his own mouth.

289. From an historical point of view no explanation is necessary, for the facts are there. From a spiritual standpoint, you know the sense in which the expression "Son of God" is to be understood, when spoken by Jesus, or accepted by him.

"I am he," replied Jesus to the High Priest, "and hereafter you shall see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of the power of God, and coming in the clouds of heaven." These words, as spoken by the Ruler and Protector of your planet, likewise include a veiled allusion to Reincarnation. He spoke of those among the spirits whom he addressed, who should have profited by the regeneration, and should be reincarnated, and living anew on your earth, and should then behold Jesus coming in all his spiritual glory, as the

visible sovereign of his purified creatures on your equally purified planet.

You may readily understand the words spoken by Jesus to the elders of the people, the chief priests, and Scribes. He spoke from a human point of view, and his words signify : Henceforth the actions of the Son of Man and his power and position will be known. Has not this knowledge been diffused and developed by human interpretations, with the progress of time and intelligence, in the first instance under the dominion of the letter, which has prepared the way for the advent of the Spirit ? And has not the New Revelation come to confirm his prophecies by teaching you "who is the Son," and by casting its soft pure light upon the pure and noble figure of Jesus ? Thus have his prophecies been justified from the day when they were spoken, until your own day ; as they will also be in the future ; for "hereafter you shall see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of the power of God."

MATTHEW, CHAP. XXVI.—VERSES 69-75. MARK,
CHAP. XIV.—VERSES 66-72. LUKE, CHAP. XXII.
VERSES 56-62.

Peter's Denial.

Matth. xxvi. (69) And Peter was sitting outside in the court, and a girl came up to him, and said, And you were with Jesus of Galilee. (70) And he denied it before them all, saying, I know not what you say. (71) And he went out into the doorway, and another saw him, and said to those who were there, And this man was with Jesus the Nazarene. (72) And he denied again with an oath, I know not the man. (73) And after a little while, the bystanders went up to Peter, and said to him, Certainly you are also one of them, for your speech makes it evident. (74) Then he began to curse and swear, I know not the man. And immediately a cock crew. (75) And Peter remembered the word of Jesus, who said to him, Before a cock shall crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. And he went out, and wept bitterly.

Mark xiv. (66) And Peter was in the courtyard below, and one of the maidservants of the high priest came, (67) And seeing Peter warming himself, looked at him, and said, And you were with Jesus of Nazareth. (68) And he denied, saying, I know not, nor take any notice of what you say. And he went out into the porch, and a cock crew. (69) And the girl seeing him again, began to say to the bystanders, This man is one of them. (70) And he denied again, and

after a little, the bystanders said to Peter again, You are certainly one of them, for you are also a Galilean, and your accent is like it. (71) And he began to curse and swear, I know not the man of whom you speak. (72) And the cock crew a second time. And Peter remembered the word which Jesus had spoken to him, Before the cock shall crow twice, you shall deny me thrice. And he thought over it, and wept.

Luke xxii. (56) And a certain girl seeing him sitting in the firelight and looking at him intently, said, This man was with him too. (57) But he denied it, saying, Woman, I know him not. (58) And after a short time, another person saw him, and said, And you are one of them. And Peter said, Man, I am not. (59) And about an hour afterwards, some one else confidently affirmed, saying, Of a truth this man was also with him, for he is a Galilean too. (60) And Peter said, Man, I know not what you say. And immediately after he had spoken, the cock crew. (61) And the Lord turned round and looked at Peter, and Peter remembered the saying of the Lord, who said to him, Before a cock shall crow, thou wilt deny me thrice. (62) And Peter went out, and wept bitterly.

§ 290. Peter had calculated on his own strength, and had gone too far. He had not sought the sole support which could sustain him—prayer; and had allowed himself to be misled by self-confidence. Thus, notwithstanding the warning of Jesus, he was not upon his guard. Great was his remorse, for his fall was due to weakness, and not to fault; he was wanting in foresight and distrust of himself, but he was not guilty of premeditated treason, resulting from indifference and selfishness. Such vices cannot be cast aside like an ill-fitting dress; but when Peter went out of the courtyard, he saw his errors, and wished to atone for them. This is the difference between weakness and guilt. It is not easy for a guilty man to reform in the course of the present life; but a weak man may acquire the strength which he lacks. Therefore, your decisions are often hasty, and you sometimes blame him when the Lord excuses, and excuse him when the Lord condemns.

Do not trouble about the trifling variations in the texts but rather pay attention to the facts, which may increase faith, and convince the incredulous.

The differences in the narratives are due to the state of incarnation, which is more or less susceptible to medianimic influence, according to circumstances. Still there is one point which requires explanation.

You are told that when the cock crew (Luke, xxii. 61, 62) the Lord turned, and looked at Peter, and Peter remembered what the Lord had said to him, and went out and wept bitterly. Jesus was not near Peter at the moment; but Peter felt a fluidic impression, which reminded him of the words of Jesus, and made him perceive his mild calm figure looking at him with a sad gaze, while he was repaid by ingratitude for the affection he had shown to Peter. At the time of Peter's denial, and the crowing of the cock, Jesus, who did not wish the moment to pass unperceived, turned towards the point where his disciple was. This gave rise to magnetic action at a distance (the same effects occur among yourselves, though in a very inferior degree); and thus Peter beheld Jesus.

MATTHEW, CHAP. XXVII.—VERSES 1-10.

Death of Judas.

(1) And when it was morning, all the chief priests and elders of the people took counsel together against Jesus, that they might put him to death. (2) And having bound him, they led him away, and handed him over to Pontius Pilate the Governor. (3) Then Judas who had betrayed him, seeing that he was condemned, repented, and returned the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, saying, (4) I have sinned, and have betrayed innocent blood. And they said, What is that to us? look thou to that. (5) And throwing down the money in the Temple, he departed, and went away and hanged himself. (6) And the chief priests took the money, and said, It is not lawful to put them into the Treasury, for it is the price of blood. (7) And having taken counsel, they bought with them the potter's field, to bury aliens. (8) Wherefore that field was called, The Field of Blood, until this day. (9) Then was fulfilled that which was spoken through Jeremiah the prophet, saying, And I took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him who was valued, who was valued by the sons of Israel. (10) And gave them for the potter's field, as the Lord appointed me.

§ 291. These are the facts; but if you compare Acts i. 18 with Matth. xxvi. 7, some explanations are necessary, as the narratives appear to contradict each other.

Judas brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and senators, and when they refused to take them he threw the money down in the Temple, and hanged himself in a field where his body was afterwards found in an advanced stage of decomposition. The chief priests and senators who

had picked up the money, heard of this, and it suggested to them the idea of buying this field for the burial of aliens, and they then buried Judas there; for the suicide forfeited the honours of religious burial among the Hebrews.

You are told in Acts that Judas bought the field with the price of his sin, and went and hanged himself there; but this arose from comments which had been made on the events afterwards recorded by Matthew; and from Judas having been buried in that place. Peter shared in this misconception, and Luke derived his statements from him.

It was the custom among the Hebrews to make ready their last resting-place; and it was supposed that Judas had bought the field with the thirty pieces of silver, because his body was found, and buried there.

MATTHEW, CHAP. XXVII.—VERSES 11-26. MARK,

CHAP. XV.—VERSES 1-15. LUKE, CHAP. XXIII.

VERSES 1-25.

Jesus before Pilate.

Matth. xxvii. (11) And Jesus stood before the governor, and the governor asked him, saying, Art thou the King of the Jews? And Jesus said to him, Thou sayest. (12) And when he was denounced by the chief priests and elders, he answered nothing. (13) Then Pilate said to him, Dost thou not know how many things they witness against thee? (14) And he answered him not a word, so that the governor was greatly surprised. (15) And after the feast, the governor was accustomed to release to the multitude a prisoner, whom they wished. (16) And they had then a notorious prisoner, called Barabbas. (17) Therefore, when they were assembled, Pilate said to them, Whom do you wish me to release to you; Barabbas, or Jesus who is called Christ? (18) For he knew that they had given him up through jealousy. (19) But while he was sitting on the divan, his wife sent to him, saying, Let there be nothing between thee and that just man, for I have suffered many things to-day in a dream on account of him. (20) And the chief priests and elders persuaded the multitudes that they should ask for Barabbas, and destroy Jesus. (21) And the governor answered and said to them, Which of these two do you wish me to release unto you? And they said, Barabbas. (22) Pilate says to them, What shall I do then with Jesus who is called Christ? They all say, Let him be crucified. (23) And the governor said, Why, what evil has he done? But they cried out exceedingly, saying, Let him be crucified. (24) And when Pilate saw that he could do no good, but rather that he caused a tumult, he took water, and washed his hands in presence of the crowd, saying, I am free from the blood of this just man; see ye to it. (25) And the

whole people answered and said, His blood be on us and on our children. (26) Then he released Barabbas unto them, and having scourged Jesus, he delivered him over to be crucified.

Mark xv. (1) And as soon as it was morning, the chief priests took counsel with the elders and scribes, and the whole Sanhedrim, and having bound Jesus, they took him away, and delivered him over to Pilate. (2) And Pilate asked him, Art thou the King of the Jews? And he answered and said to him, Thou sayest. (3) And the chief priests accused him of many things. (4) And Pilate again asked him, saying, Answerest thou nothing? look how many things they witness against thee. (5) But Jesus answered nothing at all, so that Pilate wondered. (6) And at the feast he released to them one prisoner, whom they desired. (7) And there was a man named Barabbas, bound with his fellow-rebels, who had committed murder in the insurrection. (8) And the multitude cried out, and began to demand that he should do as he had always done for them. (9) And Pilate answered them, saying, Do you wish me to release to you the King of the Jews? (10) For he knew that the chief priests had given him up through jealousy. (11) But the chief priests stirred up the crowd that he should rather release Barabbas unto them. (12) And Pilate again answered, and said to them, What then do you wish me to do with him whom you call the King of the Jews? (13) And they cried out again, Crucify him. (14) And Pilate said to them, Why, what evil has he done? And they cried out the more exceedingly, Crucify him. (15) And Pilate wishing to do enough for the multitude, released Barabbas unto them, and having scourged Jesus, he delivered him over to be crucified.

Luke xxiii. (1) And the whole multitude of them rose up, and led him away to Pilate. (2) And they began to accuse him, saying, We found this man perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Cæsar, saying that he himself is Christ, a King. (3) And Pilate asked him, saying, Art thou the King of the Jews? And he answered and said to him, Thou sayest. (4) And Pilate said to the chief priests, and to the crowds, I find no fault in this man. (5) But they were more urgent, saying, He stirs up the people, teaching in all Judæa, beginning from Galilee as far as here. (6) And when Pilate heard Galilee mentioned, he asked if the man was a Galilean? (7) And when he knew that he belonged to Herod's jurisdiction, he sent him away to Herod, who was also in Jerusalem in those days. (8) And when Herod saw Jesus, he was very glad, for he was anxious to see him for a long time, having heard many things about him; and he hoped to have seen some sign done by him. (9) And he questioned him in many words, but he answered him nothing. (10) And the chief priests and scribes stood there, violently accusing him. (11) And Herod and his military guard set him at nought and mocked him, casting on him a magnificent robe, and sent him back to Pilate. (12) And Pilate and Herod were friends with one another in that day, for before that they were at enmity between themselves. (13) And Pilate having assembled the chief priests and rulers, and the people, (14) Said to them, You bring me this man as a perverter of the people, and behold, I who have examined him in your presence, find no fault in this man whereof you accuse him. (15) Nor yet Herod, for I sent you to him, and behold he has done nothing worthy of death. (16) I will therefore chastise him and release him. (17) For it was necessary for him to release one to them at the feast. (18) But the whole multitude cried out, saying, Away with this man,

and release unto us Barabbas. (19) Who for a certain sedition that arose in the city, and for murder, was in prison. (20) Then Pilate, wishing to release Jesus, spoke to them again. (21) But they cried out, saying, Crucify him, crucify him. (22) And the third time he said to them, Why, what evil has this man done? I find no fault worthy of death in him, so I will chastise him, and release him. (23) And they insisted with loud voices, desiring that he should be crucified, and their voices and those of the high priests prevailed. (24) And Pilate gave sentence that it should be as they desired. (25) And he released to them him who was cast into prison for sedition and murder, as they asked; and he delivered over Jesus to their will.

§ 292. You need not wonder at the differences in the narratives; for each Evangelist had to enter into special details, and while one writer has given a summary of the events, another has related them more fully.

When Jesus was brought before Pilate, he only replied to the single question relative to the sovereignty of the Jews. It was a moral and spiritual sovereignty, which Pilate could not misunderstand; not because he acknowledged the mission of Jesus, but because he perceived that there was nothing of a political character in the life or actions of the man who was brought before him as a criminal. He was moved by a secret impulse to use every effort to save the accused. He was also warned by his wife, who had seen Jesus in her sleep, rising luminous from the cross, and darkness covering the world. He sought to shirk the responsibility which rested on him by sending Jesus to Herod, hoping thus to satisfy both the necessities of his political position, and his conscience too; but Herod was also unwilling to take on himself the consequences of a capital condemnation. He was undecided what to do; and vexed at the want of respect and submission which Jesus shewed for the dignity of a representative of the Cæsars, he inflicted on him a disgraceful punishment, and sent him back to Pilate, who was the proper person to deal with the case. The principal events which took place in the presence of Pilate, and between Pilate and Jesus, are not affected by Jesus being sent to Herod. We will now give you the few special explanations which are necessary.

(Luke xxiii. 7-11.)—Herod was annoyed at the refusal of Jesus to answer any of his questions, and set him at

nought, and mocked him. He clothed him in a magnificent robe, like that worn by the Emperors and their heirs apparent, in contempt and mockery ; and thus treated Jesus as an ambitious madman. Herod was not within the limits of his own jurisdiction at Jerusalem ; and Jesus was subject to the authority of Pilate, before whom the accusation was first brought.

(Luke xxvii. 12.)—Herod and Pilate were reconciled by their interchange of civilities, and deference to each other's authority in reference to the prisoner Jesus.

(Matth. xxvii. 29.)—What Pilate's wife supposed to be a dream, was a spirit-manifestation and warning, which was given her in a condition which she took for sleep, but which was only a magnetico-spiritual heaviness. In human magnetism there are several stages of disengagement of the spirit ; and it is the same in spirit-magnetism. It may simply produce lucidity, by incomplete disengagement, or else ecstasy, which only supervenes upon the complete disengagement of the spirit.

The spirits threw Pilate's wife into a state of lucidity which made it easy for her to realize the scenes which they brought before her eyes ; and thus they shewed her Jesus stretched luminous on the cross, and darkness covering the world. This spirit-manifestation was given by Pilate's guardian angel, with the permission of God, to remind him that he must choose between justice and truth on the one hand, and pride and avarice on the other ; and Pilate was confirmed by what his wife told him in his desire to save Jesus. Pilate was already influenced to save Jesus by a secret conviction of his innocence ; but this was opposed by the fear of losing his appointment ; and thus he finally yielded. Everything was so arranged by spirit influence that the innocence of Jesus and the iniquity of his condemnation should be more striking both to the men of that age, and to future generations.

(Matth. xxvii. 11 ; Mark xv. 2 ; Luke xxiii. 3.)—Pilate asked Jesus if he were the King of the Jews, because the accusation depended chiefly on this point to awaken the

fears of the Romans ; and the appearance of Jesus was so unlike any such pretensions, that it struck him with astonishment. Jesus replied, "Thou sayest!" that is, in a spiritual point of view. To understand the exact sense of his words, they must not be isolated from what he had already said, "Verily I say unto you that you shall see me no more henceforward until you shall say, Blessed is he who cometh in the name of the Lord." (Luke xix. 38 ; xiii. 35.)

After this, Pilate twice gave him the title of King of the Jews, in derision (Mark xv. 9, 14), supposing him to be a weak-minded man, who had been led astray by madness rather than by ambition.

MATTHEW, CHAP. XXVII.—VERSES 27–30. MARK,
CHAP. XV.—VERSES 16–19.

Insults to Jesus.

Matth. xxvii. (27) Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the Prætorium, and gathered round him the whole band. (28) And having stripped him, they put on him a scarlet robe. (29) And having plaited a crown of thorns, they put it on his head, and put a reed in his right hand, and they knelt before him and mocked him, saying, Hail, King of the Jews. (30) And when they had spit upon him, they took the reed, and struck him on the head.

Mark xv. (16) And the soldiers led him into the court which is the Prætorium, and assembled the whole band. (17) And they put on him a purple robe, and having plaited a crown of thorns, they put it on him. (18) And they began to salute him, Hail, King of the Jews. (19) And they struck him on the head with a reed, and spit upon him, and bowed their knees, and did homage to him.

§ 293. This is a continued lesson and example to men. You will find in the outrages which Jesus suffered, and in the patience and resignation which he displayed, the line of conduct which you ought to pursue. Never join with those who accuse or insult others, however right it may seem to you ; for you may be mistaken, and accuse or injure an innocent man. The human senses are weak, and you are often deceived ; and he who appears to you to be guilty, and really is so in the eyes of men, may be just before God. Therefore abstain, for your intelligence is often at fault.

If you are exposed to the ridicule and contempt of your brethren, however unjust may be their acts and accusations, always reply to them by patience and meekness. Do not attempt to teach the blind the principles and properties of light, for you would lose your time, but strengthen yourselves in the purity of your intentions, conscience, and actions, and be sure that the Lord will always be a just judge towards you.

MATTHEW, CHAP. XXVII.—VERSES 31–32. MARK,
CHAP. XV.—VERSES 20–21. LUKE, CHAP. XXIII.
VERSES 26–31.

Jesus led to Execution.

Matth. xxvii. (31) And after they had mocked him, they took the robe off him, and put on him his own clothes, and led him away to be crucified. (32) And as they were coming out, they found a man named Simon, who was a Cyrenian; this man they compelled to bear his cross.

Mark xv. (20) And when they had mocked him, they took the purple robe off him, and dressed him in his own clothes; and they led him out to crucify him. (21) And they compel one Simon, a Cyrenian, who passed by, coming from the country (the father of Alexander and Rufus), to bear his cross.

Luke xxiii. (26) And as they led him out, they seized upon a certain Simon, a Cyrenian, who came from the country, and placed the cross upon him, to carry behind Jesus. (27) And there followed him a great multitude of people and women, who also beat themselves, and bewailed him. (28) And Jesus turned towards them, and said, Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves and your children. (29) For behold the days shall come in which they shall say, Blessed are the barren, and the wombs which never bare, and the breasts which never suckled. (30) Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, Fall on us; and to the hills, Cover us. (31) For if they do these things in the green tree, what shall be done in the dry?

§ 294. Jesus, after having been mocked and ridiculed by all, was bound and led to execution. Pilate delivered him over to the Jews who desired to put him to death; but the soldiers of the Tetrarch were the guards and executioners of the sentence, and were to watch over the execution until the crucified malefactors had breathed their last.

Jesus walked with pain and difficulty. Was it not necessary to show men how far submission and resignation could go? Not one complaint or reproach escaped his

lips; but do not say that he was at ease, for he suffered very much in heart at the time at the hardness of men. He suffered, when he foresaw how many ages must still pass over your heads before the baptism of the Spirit should have purified you. He suffered when he foresaw the sufferings that still awaited his brethren in the future; those brethren whom he loved so ardently that he consented to show them their path by walking in it himself. He suffered anguish like that of a mother who beholds her dearly beloved sons falling into guilty courses, and foresees that the law must fall on and overwhelm them. She has said to them, "Come to me, come to me; repent, and I will obtain your pardon;" but she sees them turn their heads away, and bury themselves deeper and deeper in their guilty courses. This tender mother does not suffer in her flesh, and her bones are not broken; but all the fibres of her heart are violently wrenched, and the punishment hanging over her beloved ones, tortures her. Thus Jesus suffered severely in his love, and still suffers when he sees your obduracy. Appease his sufferings by your love and submission; for this is the only balm which can heal the wounds caused by your ingratitude and crimes.

In the figurative words which Jesus addressed to the women who lamented over his fate, he alluded both to the destruction of Jerusalem, and also to the calamities which are inevitably necessary for the purification and transformation of your planet and its humanity. These future calamities will effect the destruction of the modern Jerusalem of your present world, to rebuild a new city, and an indestructible temple.

(Luke xxiii. 31.)—This was a proverbial expression among the Jews, to express the just and the sinners. If the just suffer thus, how will the sinners be treated? Jesus pronounced these words, which are also figurative, to impress those who should hear or read them, and make them comprehend the fate reserved for the guilty ones who misunderstand the just and sublime morality of which he is the personification.

MATTHEW, CHAP. XXVII.—VERSES 33–38. MARK,
CHAP. XV.—VERSES 22–28. LUKE, CHAP. XXIII.
VERSES 32–34, 38.

Crucifixion of Jesus.

Matth. xxvii. (33) And when they came to a place called Golgotha, which is called the Place of a Skull, (34) They gave him to drink vinegar mixed with gall ; and when he had tasted it, he would not drink. (35) And when they had crucified him, they divided his clothes among them, casting lots, that the word of the prophet might be fulfilled : They divided my clothes among them, and cast lots for my apparel. (36) And they sat down and watched him there. (37) And they placed over his head his accusation written, This is Jesus, the King of the Jews. (38) Then they crucified with him two thieves, one on the right hand, and one on the left.

Mark xv. (22) And they took him to a place, Golgotha, which means, when interpreted, Place of a Skull. (23) And they gave him wine mixed with myrrh to drink, but he would not take it. (24) And when they had crucified him, they divided his clothes, casting lots on them, whose they should be. (25) And it was the third hour, and they crucified him. (26) And the inscription of his sentence was written above : The King of the Jews. (27) And they crucified two thieves with him, one on his right hand, and the other on his left. (28) And the writing was fulfilled, which said, And he was numbered with the lawless.

Luke xxiii. (32) And two other malefactors were taken to be put to death with him. (33) And when they came to the place called a Skull they crucified him there, and the malefactors, one on the right hand, and the other on the left. (34) And Jesus said, Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do. And they divided his clothes, and cast lots. (38) And there was also an inscription written over him in Greek and Roman and Hebrew letters, This is the King of the Jews.

§ 295. You have seen how Jesus was led to execution. He uttered no murmur, but was always calm and dignified ; for, up to the last moment, ~~he~~ was to set men an example of moderation in words and actions, submission to the laws, however iniquitous, and respect for their agents, however infamous. But truth must be made manifest even above the cross to which the Just One was fixed. He is the King of the Jews, and the King of the earth, for he was before the heavens. Rather is he the King of the inhabitants of the earth, for his kingdom is not of this world, and cannot give offence in any way to the kings of this evil world.

Jesus was to set an example of mercy and pardon for the revilers and judges who are led astray by ignorance and evil

passions; and when he was crucified, he spoke words which were destined to open the paths of moral progress to all humanity: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." It was the Jews who crucified Jesus by their will; but the Roman soldiers performed the outward action. When the multitude demanded his execution, Pilate delivered him up to their will by consenting to his death, and the crowd, always greedy for such spectacles, followed him with shouts and insults; but he was in the hands of the Roman soldiers who were charged with the execution of the sentence.

§ 296. According to Mark and Matthew, the Roman soldiers crucified Jesus; and according to Luke, it was the Jews.

We adhere to what we have just said. The Jews condemned Jesus by their moral act, and it was Pontius Pilate who judicially condemned Jesus to death. It was also the Jews who accompanied Jesus to watch over his execution; but the Roman soldiers executed the sentence, as the executioner fulfils the sentence of death pronounced by the judge. The narratives are designed to bring into relief both the moral and material actions. Luke referred to the purely moral act of the Jews, which, in this case especially, was worse than the material act. The Roman soldiers were only passive instruments. Do you accuse the axe which falls on the neck of the innocent, for the unjust sentence which condemns him? Does not the whole responsibility rest on the erring judge or jury, and not on the executioner, or the iron which he uses? Matthew and Mark referred to the outward act.

The narrative of John (xix. 14-18, 23), which should not be isolated from those of the other Evangelists, included both the material and the moral action. The moral, in saying (v. 18) that the Jews crucified Jesus, and the material in saying (v. 23) that the soldiers effected the crucifixion.

MATTHEW, CHAP. XXVII.—VERSES 39-43. MARK,
CHAP. XV.—VERSES 29-32. LUKE, CHAP. XXIII.
VERSES 35-37.

Insults to Jesus on the Cross.

Matth. xxvii. (39) And they who passed by blasphemed him, shaking their heads, and saying, (40) Thou who wouldst destroy the temple and build it in three days, save thyself. If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross. (41) And likewise also the chief priests mocked him, with the Scribes and elders, and said, (42) He saved others ; himself he cannot save. If he is the King of Israel, then let him come down from the cross, and we will believe in him. (43) He trusted in God ; let him deliver him now, if he will, for he said, I am the Son of God.

Mark xv. (29) And those who passed by blasphemed him, shaking their heads, and saying, Alas for him who would destroy the Temple, and build it in three days ! (30) Save thyself, and come down from the cross. (31) And likewise also the chief priests joked with one another, and with the Scribes, and said, He saved others ; himself he cannot save. (32) Let Christ, the King of Israel, come down from the cross, that we may see and believe.

Luke xxiii. (35) And the people stood looking on. And the rulers scoffed with them, saying, He saved others ; let him save himself, if this is the Christ whom God hath chosen. (36) And the soldiers also derided him, coming to him, and offering him vinegar, (37) And saying, If thou art the King of the Jews, save thyself.

§ 297. These verses still manifest the ingratitude and folly of men, who insult those whom they ought most to revere. They are also a warning and lesson to those who in your unbelieving and mocking days, reject the spiritual revelation, and thus the spiritual mission of Christ, as his earthly mission was rejected.

The chief priests, Scribes, Pharisees, and elders were proud, backward, and guilty spirits ; and the people around and the passers by were incapable of understanding the object and necessity of this mission which had been in preparation for long ages, and which was fulfilled, according to the infinite knowledge and wisdom of God, in such a manner as to be useful at the time, and to prepare for the future, to lead your humanity through the Christian era, under the empire of the letter, with the shell of mystery, and the prestige of miracle, to the period of the new era of

the Christianity of Christ ; and to the advent of the Spirit of Truth, which comes to free the spirit from the letter, and to make known what has remained hidden until your own days.

MATTHEW, CHAP. XXVII.—VERSES 44. MARK,
CHAP. XV.—VERSE 32. LUKE, CHAP. XXIII.
VERSES 39-43.

The Penitent Thief.

Matth. xxvii. (44) And the thieves who were crucified with him reproached him.

Mark xv. (32) And they who were crucified with him reproached him.

Luke xxiii. (39) And one of the crucified malefactors blasphemed against him, saying, If thou be the Christ, save thyself and us. (40) But the other answered and rebuked him, saying, Dost thou not fear God, because thou art in the same condemnation? (41) And we indeed justly, for we are receiving the just reward for our deeds, but this man has done nothing unlawful. (42) And he said to Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. (43) And Jesus said to him, Verily I say to thee, To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise.

§ 298. These verses are perfectly consistent. The narrative of Luke is necessary to complete the accounts given by the other Evangelists. Both the robbers were wicked and hardened, and joined at first in the insults of the chief priests, and the crowd ; and one of them continued to blaspheme Jesus, demanding that he should show his power by a miracle, and save them also. But the other was touched by the gentleness and benevolence of Jesus in replying to the outrages which he endured by praying for the guilty. He perceived that there was something in him which exalted him above humanity ; and being near the moment when liberty restores light to the spirit, he obtained some confused idea of the truth. He then implored the aid of one whom he perceived was more powerful in heavenly than in earthly things ; and Jesus replied in these encouraging words, " Verily I say to thee, to-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise."

These last words have given rise to many false interpre-

tations and controversies, and still continue to do so. They do not mean that a man whose life has been one of crime and violence will be exempted from all expiation or reparation by the mere fact of his repentance, but only that by quitting life at such a moment, he is ready to enter on the path of progress which will lead him rapidly to well-doing. In fact, as regards the spirit, Paradise is not, as you have supposed, a place of ecstatic blessedness, without an object, and with no hope of improvement. It is, on the contrary, the entrance to the luminous path which permits the spirit to behold the prize reserved for its labours. It is the comprehension of the future, joined with the ardent desire of attaining it.

It is in this sense that Jesus promised the penitent thief admission into Paradise, where the sufferings caused by remorse for past faults are a joy to the spirit who perceives the progress that he may make. Then Jesus himself would show him, by his good spirits, the road that he must follow, and the happiness which would await him at last.

§ 299. The Catholic Church has based on these words of Jesus her system of reprobation and grace, and indulgence granted to faith, independently of works, and has placed the penitent thief among the blessed from the mere fact of his sincere repentance, which she styles "perfect contrition."

This is a false interpretation of the Master's words, which have been understood literally, and not according to the spirit. We have just told you that the words of Jesus mean, "As soon as I resume my proper station, by returning to my own spiritual nature, you will re-enter spiritual life, and will see clearly both the path which you must follow, and the goal to be attained."

It is true that repentance is one means of attaining to profitable expiation, activity in experiences, and perseverance in the future. Sincere repentance is the removal of a bandage from the eyes of a blindfolded man, and he then perceives the dazzling light before him, and desires to attain it; but it is none the less needful that he should set out on the road. He can see the obstacles better, and overcome

them easier, and arrive at the goal more rapidly; but you must never forget that it will be given to each according to his works. Good works blot out evil ones; but the guilty spirit can only advance by reparation.

MATTHEW, CHAP. XXVII.—VERSES 45–50. MARK,
CHAP. XV.—VERSES 33–37. LUKE, CHAP. XXIII.
VERSES 44, 46.

Apparent death of Jesus.

Matth. xxvii. (45) And from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land, until the ninth hour. (46) And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? (47) And some of those who were standing there heard him, and said, This man calls for Elijah. (48) And immediately one of them ran and took a sponge, and filled it with vinegar, and having put it on a reed, gave him to drink. (49) And the rest said, Let him be; let us see whether Elijah will come to save him. (50) And Jesus cried out again with a great voice, and yielded up his spirit.

Mark xv. (33) And when it was the sixth hour there was darkness in the whole country until the ninth hour. (34) And at that hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani; which is, being interpreted, My God, my God, wherefore hast thou forsaken me? (35) And some of those who were standing by heard it, and said, Behold, he calls Elijah. (36) And some one ran and filled a sponge with vinegar, and put it on a reed, and gave him to drink, saying, Let him be; we will see if Elijah will come to take him down. (37) And Jesus, having cried with a loud voice, expired.

Luke xxiii. (44) And it was about the sixth hour, and there was darkness over the whole country until the ninth hour. (46) And Jesus, having cried out with a loud voice, said, Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit; and saying these words, he expired.

§ 300. The words of Jesus have been misinterpreted. Could he have been abandoned by the Lord when he had accomplished his mission? When the Divine Model left his tangible perispritic body on the cross, and his spirit regained its liberty, he cried out, "Lord, all is accomplished; here am I." We give you these words exactly, by the Master's orders.

In order to explain the various narratives of the Evangelists, we must explain what actually took place, and relate the facts with historical precision, likewise by the Master's orders.

After speaking to the penitent thief, Jesus uttered a loud

cry to attract the attention of the people to his "last moments," on account of the phenomena which were about to take place. The two thieves were moaning; the disciples of Jesus raised their voices in the greatness of their grief; and all these various cries mingled together.

It was amid the tumultuous agitation of a crowd animated by such different feelings that Jesus said, "Lord, all is accomplished, here am I;" and the penitent thief cried out in prayer, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani;" that is, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

Some of those present thought that Jesus had spoken these words; and there was some uncertainty about what Jesus had said, for his words were lost amid the agitation of the crowd. We will explain presently why it was designed to happen thus. Later on, commentaries arose, and the different versions given in the Gospels result from this.

Since you began to study spiritual science, have you not perceived that the best medium, even the most docile and flexible, may be left to himself in certain cases, although in a state of medianimic excitement, so that his own personality is the agent, when he believes himself to be still under influence? In certain cases, the Apostles recorded the events under the impression of their own judgment, while other events were brought before their eyes, as it were, medianimically.

Thus the four Evangelists were left to themselves in those parts of their narratives which related to the different current interpretations of the words attributed to Jesus, and they recorded them under the influence of their own judgment. The narrative which comes nearest to what actually took place is that of John, who was in the midst of the noise and confusion near the cross.

Matthew and Mark adopted the version which attributed to Jesus the words, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani."

According to the groove which was medianimically traced out for the Evangelists, Jesus, under the veil of the letter, was a mysterious and exceptional being, to human eyes, whose nature they could not define, and who participated

at the same time both in your humanity, and in divinity. He was a man clothed with a material human body, the Son of God, the brother of his disciples, and the King of the Jews, who had received all power in heaven and on earth.

Matthew and Mark were left to themselves, because it was necessary to permit men to attribute a relative human principle to Jesus. Men have long regarded this phrase as an irrefutable proof that Jesus suffered materially, and was overcome by his sufferings, which might excuse human weakness in the hour of trial. The false interpretation reproduced by Matthew and Luke was also a means of counterbalancing the belief in the divinity of Christ, in the controversies which arose on this subject, and which were needful to prepare the minds of men to receive the present revelation, which teaches you who is the Son. Luke wrote within the limits which were medianimically assigned to him, but was left to his own judgment; and having adopted the opinion of Paul, who regarded Christ as the Mediator between God and man, he gave this version of the words of Jesus: "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." John also wrote within his own limits, and his narrative was designed to furnish human interpreters, according to the letter, with the elements of belief in the divinity of Christ; but it also contained expressions designed to counteract this belief at the time of the advent of the Spirit, and to serve as the basis of the New Revelation which should make known the nature and origin of the Son, and the position which he occupies towards God. John, influenced by his own judgment, and according to what he had been able to retain, adopted this version of the words which were spoken, "It is finished."* The versions adopted by Luke and John expressed the same idea as the words literally pronounced by Jesus, which serve as an example both of love and submission. Jesus presented himself before the Lord, and committed himself into his hands, after having accomplished everything.

* John xix. 28, 30.

You are told that Jesus yielded up his spirit, or expired. These expressions convey the same idea ; the return of the spirit to spirit-life, where it regains its freedom. But there is no comparison between the return of Jesus, and yours. In your case, material human incarnation is an exile for trials and expiations. Life is taken away from you, and when you have left it you cannot resume it again. You can only have a new existence by means of reincarnation, and whatever efforts you may have made during your earthly life, your humanity always leads you into some weakness or failings, even if not into actual faults. When you return to spirit-life, you are always under the burden of judgment, and of a more or less painful repentance, according to your degree of culpability.

But the return of Jesus to spirit-life was wholly different. He has told you so, when alluding to his return, and to the events and circumstances of his earthly mission, both before and after his "death."* He laid down his life to take it up again, and no one did, or could, take it from him ; but he laid it down of himself. He had power to lay it down, and he had power to take it up again. Thus he did not undergo material human incarnation like yours, and his absence from his country was not an exile ; for very frequently, when his spirit was watching over the affairs of your globe, he was believed to have retired into solitude to pray. He soared above your universe, wisely directing the course of all things, and dispensing the orders of the Sovereign Master. No one took his life from him, but he laid it down of himself, when his spirit resumed its liberty, and left his tangible perispritic body on the Cross. He took it up again, "according to the commandment that he had received from his Father" for his reappearance, which is called his "resurrection," and for the completion of his earthly mission. He laid it down finally of himself, after the completion of his mission, at the period called the Ascension, by abandoning his tangible perispritic

* John x. 47, 48.

body, and by restoring the elements of which it was composed to the sources whence they were derived. He was pure from any fault, and suffered no regret or expiation ; he, the Just One, returned to his own country as the judge, and not as the accused.

The darkness which covered the earth, and the darkening of the sun, was a powerful physical effect produced by spiritual agency, and was designed to impress the masses strongly, and to produce a great effect on future generations also.

MATTHEW, CHAP. XXVII.—VERSES 51-56. MARK, CHAP. XV.—VERSES 38-41. LUKE, CHAP. XXIII. VERSES 45, 47-49.

Earthquake and Prodigious.

Matth. xxvii. (51) And behold the veil of the Temple was rent in two from top to bottom, and the earth was shaken, and the rocks were rent. (52) And the tombs were opened, and many bodies of the holy men at rest were raised. (53) And coming out of the tombs after his resurrection, came into the holy city, and appeared to many. (54) And the centurion and those who were with him, guarding Jesus, seeing the earthquake and the things which happened, feared exceedingly, and said, Truly this was the Son of God. (55) And many women were there, looking on from a distance. They were those who followed Jesus from Galilee, and ministered to him. (56) Among them was Mary Magdalene, and Mary, the mother of James and Josés, and the mother of the sons of Zebedee.

Mark xv. (38) And the veil of the Temple was rent in two from above to below. (39) And the centurion, who was standing over against him, seeing how he cried out and expired, said, Truly this man was a Son of God. (40) And there were also women looking on from a distance, among whom were also Mary Magdalene, and Mary, the mother of James the Little, and of Josés and Salome. (41) Who also, when he was in Galilee, followed him, and ministered unto him ; and many others who went up with him to Jerusalem.

Luke xxiii. (45) And the sun was darkened, and the veil of the Temple was rent in the middle. (47) And the centurion, seeing what took place, glorified God, saying, Of a truth this was a just man. (48) And all the multitudes who assembled to this spectacle, seeing what was done, beat their breasts, and returned. (49) And all who knew him, and the women who followed him from Galilee, stood afar off, beholding these things.

§ 301. You will not open the eyes of those who persist in closing them ; and you cannot persuade those who deny

all ultra-mundane influence to admit spiritual facts. The phenomena which attended the apparent death of Jesus were produced by the spirits around him, who were incalculably numerous.

It was necessary to strike the gross and ignorant masses with consternation, and to appeal to the material senses of those who only recognized matter; and the partial earthquake produced by the combination of fluids, and the vapour which obscured the light of day for a short time, were more effective than the miracles of mercy and charity which Jesus had been working for three years.

The darkening of the sun and the darkness which covered the earth were produced by opaque fluids collected and combined by the action of spirits. The earthquake was a partial phenomenon, affecting that part of the country where the Jews, who had pursued Jesus with hatred and insult were assembled. It extended to the Temple, where the priests and elders had returned after the execution. It was a purely spiritual phenomenon, which was effected by a simple combination of the requisite fluids. Ordinary earthquakes are a planetary crisis in the work of the progressive transformation of your world, and are produced by volcanic shocks, which are more or less violent in proportion to the distance and depth of the agency. But this earthquake was due to other causes, and did not differ, except in power, from those which disturb a room or furniture, and move objects before your eyes. The action was stronger, but the agency was the same. The rending of the rocks was also a physical phenomenon, produced by the same direct, but occult action of the spirits of the Lord, and took place at the same time as the shock which affected the Temple.†

Let it not be objected that the spirits used means unworthy of their character and elevation, and had recourse to jugglery. We reply beforehand to such criticisms that the Lord has placed in the hands of his servants the means required for the direction of the worlds, and the conversion of men; and these means are employed according to the circumstances and necessities of the period.

(Matth. xxvii. 52, 53.)—This narrative reproduces the human idea (with its miraculous character and marvellous circumstances) of visible apparitions of spirits. The ignorance and prejudice of the men of that age were incapable of understanding and explaining the fact, and they believed in a corporeal resurrection by the return of a spirit into its corpse, which it either resumed in its decomposition, or reconstituted from the dust. The Apostles and Evangelists shared in the ignorance and superstition of the masses, in this respect.

The spirits who manifested themselves assumed forms which might be recognized, and make a greater impression on the people. We say assumed, for these manifestations were not produced by elevated spirits, but by good spirits of a relatively inferior order. The elevated spirits whose likeness the others assumed, and who were called, in the figurative language suited to the age, "the holy ones at rest," were the prophets, and those whose austere and just lives had earned public admiration. Thus, when the passage is interpreted in spirit and in truth, it simply signifies, "Spirits made themselves visible to the eyes of men." "They were seen by many"—*i.e.*, by those who were, unknown to themselves, gifted with the faculty of seeing medianimically.

The Centurion and those with him who were guarding Jesus witnessed the earthquake and the other phenomena which took place under their eyes at the very moment when Jesus uttered a loud cry. They were seized with terror; and as they supposed that the wrath of God was manifested before their eyes against the iniquity of the execution, they said, "Truly this was a just man; truly this was the Son of God." These two expressions here imply the same idea; and the term Son is not to be understood as descent, though it afterwards gave rise to the human dogma of the divinity of Christ, according to human interpretations, under the empire and veil of the letter.

MATTHEW, CHAP. XXVII.—VERSES 57–61. MARK,
CHAP. XV.—VERSES 42–47. LUKE, CHAP. XXIII.
VERSES 50–56.

Burial of Jesus.

Matth. xxvii. (57) And when it was evening, there came a rich man from Arimathæa, named Joseph, who himself was a disciple of Jesus also. (58) He came to Pilate, and asked for the body of Jesus. Then Pilate commanded that the body should be given up to him. (59) And taking the body of Jesus, he wrapped it in clean linen. (60) And placed it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn in the rock. And he rolled a great stone to the door of the tomb, and went away. (61) And Mary Magdalene was there, and the other Mary, sitting over against the tomb.

Mark xv. (42) And it being now evening, since it was the preparation, which is the eve of the Sabbath, (43) Joseph of Arimathæa came, an honourable counsellor, who also himself was waiting for the kingdom of God. He went in boldly to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. (44) And Pilate wondered that he was already dead, and having summoned the centurion, he asked him if he had been long dead. (45) And when he knew it from the centurion, he gave the body to Joseph. (46) And he bought muslin and took him down and wrapped him in the muslin, and laid him in a tomb which was hewn from the rock, and rolled a stone to the door of the tomb. (47) And Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Jesus saw where he was placed.

Luke xxiii. (50) And behold a man named Joseph, who was a counsellor, a good and just man, (51) (Who was not a party to their counsel and action) from Arimathæa, a city of the Jews, who also himself waited for the kingdom of God; (52) This man came to Pilate, and requested the body of Jesus. (53) And took it down, and wrapped it in muslin, and placed it in a hewn tomb, in which no one was laid before. (54) And it was the day of preparation, and the Sabbath was dawning. (55) And certain women, who had come with him from Galilee, followed, and saw the tomb, and how his body was laid. (56) And they returned, and prepared spice and myrrh, and rested on the Sabbath-day, according to the commandment.

§ 302. These facts belong to history, and require no comment. The body of Jesus was laid in the tomb, and the events which followed took their course.

MATTHEW, CHAP. XXVII.—VERSES 62–66.

The Stone Closing the Door of the Tomb Sealed and Guarded.

(62) Now on the morrow, which is after the preparation, the chief priests and scribes gathered together to Pilate, saying, (63) Lord, we remember that this deceiver said, when he was alive, After three days

I shall rise again. (64) Order, therefore, that the tomb be made secure until the third day, lest his disciples should come by night and steal him, and should say to the people, He is risen from the dead ; and the last deceit shall be worse than the first. (65) And Pilate said to them, You have a guard ; go and make it as secure as you can. (66) And they went with the guard, and made the tomb secure, sealing the stone.

§ 303. The Jews knew the importance of the words of Jesus, and the secret voice of their conscience made them fear that they might be true. The soldiers appointed to guard the tomb were furnished by the Roman militia. The Jews had no army, and could only employ the military force by the authority of the Tetrarch who governed the province. Pilate's reply (v. 65) means, "The soldiers are at your disposal : I consent."

The chief priests and Pharisees knew that Jesus had said that he would rise again three days after his death. They had the greatest interest in preserving the body as a convincing proof to confound the pretences of the Master's disciples, and to show to the people, in case the disciples sought to spread the report of his resurrection. They would then be able to expose the imposture, having a sure weapon to combat and crush the enemies of their faith. Thus they took precautions to guard the tomb until the Sabbath was past, when they could take needful steps to relieve the authorities of the care of watching the tomb, and could provide for their own interests. They had posted trustworthy spies in sight of the cross.

Joseph of Arimathæa believed that he was acting secretly, but the agents of the priests followed him. Some observed what took place, while others remained on guard in sight of the tomb, to make sure that no one else should enter it ; which would, indeed, have been opposed to Hebrew customs, the Sabbath being inviolable, especially for the performance of any act regarded as a pollution, such as the contact of a dead body. The chief priests and Pharisees knew positively when they went to Pilate that the body was in the tomb, and had not been carried away by the disciples or any one else. Then they went to the

tomb, escorted by the soldiers whom Pilate had assigned them as a guard, and they satisfied themselves that the body was still there. Having verified the fact, they sealed the stone, and posted the guards. It was because they had verified the presence of the body, and seen it themselves, that when some of the guards related what had passed (Matth. xxvii. 11-13), they bribed the soldiers to say that the disciples came by night, and removed the body while the guard slept, and thus spread the report that it was removed after the tomb had been sealed, and the guard posted. Consequently the body was really in the tomb when they visited it.

Let those prejudiced critics who say that the precautions taken by the Jews were insufficient, and that the disciples had had time to remove the body of Jesus previously, reflect on what they say. Do they really believe that the chief priests and the hostile mob who were present during the last moments of Jesus were so simple as to have taken no precaution to watch, until the feast of the Sabbath was past, and they could relieve the authorities of the care of guarding the tomb, and could protect their own interests? Do they really believe that those who had so great an interest in preventing fraud, would not have ascertained if the body was still in the tomb, before they finally closed and sealed it? This would have been very simple and confiding of these priests, who knew all human trickeries by profession, these proud Pharisees, these learned Scribes !

If they had not followed Joseph of Arimathæa secretly (not in person, but by their spies), to know where and how the body had been disposed of, their request to Pilate would have been another blunder. If the Jews, whose bitter hostility to Jesus pursued him even after death, had neglected to do this, and to keep watch on the tomb, and ascertain that no one had entered since the body was laid there, would it not have been sheer folly for them to ask next day that the tomb should be guarded lest the disciples should steal the body ; and to seal the stone, and post the guards, without first satisfying themselves that the body was still there ?

Would any critic, whose objections imply that the Jews acted thus, be so confident and credulous, to use no stronger expression, as to close a door in such a manner, after the prisoner had escaped, without even verifying the circumstance beforehand? He who would prove too much, often arrives at a result contrary to what he intended.

MATTHEW, CHAP. XXVIII.—VERSES 1-15. MARK, CHAP. XVI.—VERSES 1-11. LUKE, CHAP. XXIV.

VERSES 1-12.

Visit of the Women to the Tomb.

Matth. xxviii. (1) And after the Sabbath, as it was dawning on the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary, to view the tomb. (2) And behold there was a great earthquake, for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it. (3) And his countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow. (4) And from fear of him the keepers shook, and became as dead men. (5) And the angel answered and said to the women, Fear not, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. (6) He is not here, for he is risen, as he said; come and see the place where the Lord lay. (7) And go quickly and tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead; and behold he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall you see him; lo, I have told you. (8) And they came out of the sepulchre quickly with fear and great joy, and ran to bring the tidings to his disciples. (9) And as they went to tell the disciples, lo, Jesus met them, saying, Hail. And they came and took hold of his feet, and did him homage. (10) Then said Jesus to them, Do not fear; go and tell my brethren that they shall depart into Galilee, and there shall they see me. (11) And while they were going, behold some of the guard came into the city, and told the high priests all that had happened. (12) And being assembled with the elders, and having taken counsel together, they gave as much money as was necessary to the soldiers, saying, (13) Say, His disciples came by night and stole him while we were asleep. (14) And if the governor should hear this, we will persuade him, and make you secure. (15) And they took the money, and did as they were taught, and this saying is reported among the Jews to this day.

Mark xvi. (1) And when the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, bought spices that they might come and anoint him. (2) And very early in the morning, on the first day of the week, they came to the tomb at sunrise. (3) And they said among themselves, Who will roll away the stone for us from the door of the tomb? (4) And when they looked they saw that the stone was rolled away, for it was very large. (5) And coming into the tomb, they saw a young man sitting on the right hand, clothed in a white robe, and they were astounded. (6) And he said to them, Be not astounded. You seek Jesus the Nazarene, who was crucified; he

is risen ; he is not here ; behold the place where they laid him. (7) But go and tell his disciples and Peter that he goeth before you into Galilee ; there shall you see him, as he said to you. (8) And going out quickly, they fled from the tomb and trembling and amazement seized upon them, and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid. (9) And having risen early on the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had cast seven devils. (10) And she went and told those who were with him, while they mourned and wept. (11) And when they heard that he was alive, and had been seen by her, they did not believe.

Luke xxiv. (1) And on the first day of the week, they came to the tomb early in the morning to bring the spices which they had prepared ; and certain persons with them. (2) And they found the stone rolled away from the tomb. (3) And when they went in, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. (4) And it came to pass that while they were perplexed about this, behold two men stood by them in dazzling garments. (5) And they were frightened, and fell to the ground on their faces, And they said to them, Why seek ye the living among the dead ? (6) He is not here, but he is risen ; remember what he said to you while he was still in Galilee, saying, (7) It is fitting that the Son of Man must be offered up at the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and on the third day rise again. (8) And they remembered his words. (9) And turned back from the tomb, and reported all these things to the eleven and to the rest. (10) And it was Mary Magdalene, and Joanna, and Mary the mother of James, and the others with them who told these things to the Apostles. (11) And their words seemed to them like idle tales, and they did not believe them. (12) But Peter rose up, and ran to the tomb, and stooped down and saw the linen wrappings lying by themselves, and he departed, wondering to himself at what had happened.

§ 304. Every Evangelist preserved the independence of his nature, under spiritual influence, and therefore the account of events which they had all witnessed varies in form, though the substance is always the same ; and on the other hand, what is incomplete or omitted in the narrative of one, is mentioned by the others. Thus when the four narratives are compared and collated, the events are fully narrated, both in the details and as a whole.

The presence of the women at the tomb was expected, and the embalming and perfuming of the body was fixed for sunrise on the first day of the week. (Mark xvi. 1. ; Luke xxiii. 55, 56.)

As soon as the Sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome, and Joanna, and the others who were with them, set out very early, when the day had scarcely begun to dawn, and arrived at the tomb at sunrise, bringing the perfumes that they had prepared to

embalm the body of Jesus. (Matth. xxviii. 1 ; Mark xvi. 1, Luke xxiii. 55, 56, and xxiv. 1.)

They said to each other "Who will roll away the stone from the door of the tomb for us?" (Mark xvi. 3.)

And suddenly there was a great earthquake, and at the same instant the stone which closed the tomb was unsealed, overthrown, and removed. The guards were so terrified that they became like dead men, and the women (and not the guards, for the women only were seeing and hearing mediums) saw an angel of the Lord (a superior spirit) whose face was shining like lightning, and his garments white as snow. He descended from heaven and sat down on the stone which he had rolled away (Matth. xxviii. 2-4). Thus, according to the narratives of Mark, Luke, and John, which are incomplete, because the details are omitted, "Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, looked and saw that the stone, which was very large, had been rolled away." (Mark xvi. 4 ; Luke xxiv. 2 ; John xx. 1.)

The angel, addressing the women, said, "Fear not, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here, but is risen, as he said to you. Come and see the place where the Lord lay, and hasten to tell his disciples that he has risen. He will go before you into Galilee, and there you shall see him ; behold I have told you." (Matth. xxviii. 5-7.) And going into the tomb (with the angel who had just spoken to them) they saw an angel (or spirit) whom they took for a young man, clothed in a white robe, sitting on the right hand, and they were greatly terrified. (Mark xvi. 5.)

Thus, according to the narrative of Luke, which is incomplete on account of the details being omitted, the women entered the tomb after the stone had been rolled away, and suddenly saw before them two angels or spirits, clothed in shining garments, whom, in their surprise and alarm, they took for two men. (Luke xxiv. 3, 4.) When they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus, which caused them great consternation, and as they looked on the ground, the two angels (or spirits) said to them, "Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen ;

remember what he said to you while he was in Galilee, It is necessary for the Son of Man to be delivered into the hands of sinners, to be crucified, and to rise again on the third day." They then recollected the words of Jesus (Luke xxiv. 3-8), and the angel, who was sitting on the right hand, guarding the tomb, said to them, "Fear not; you seek Jesus; he is arisen; he is not here; see the place where they laid him; but go and tell his disciples and Peter that he is going before you into Galilee, and there shall you see him, as he said to you." (Mark xvi. 6, 7). They immediately left the sepulchre with fear and great joy; and fled from it trembling, and their alarm was so great that they said nothing to anyone, but ran to announce these things to the eleven disciples, and to all the others. (Matth. xxviii. 8; Mark xvi. 8; Luke xxiv. 9).

They who brought this report to the disciples were Mary Magdalene, Joanna, and Mary the mother of James, and those who were with them (Luke xxiv. 10). They separated, and went different ways to tell their story. Mary Magdalene then ran to Simon Peter, and the other disciple whom Jesus loved, and said to them (for she still doubted), "They have taken away the Lord from the tomb, and we know not where they have laid him." Peter and the other disciple went out immediately, and they both ran to the sepulchre, but the other disciple outran Peter, and arrived there first, and, stooping down, he saw the linen clothes on the ground, but he did not go in. Simon Peter, who followed him, then arrived, and entered the tomb. He saw the linen clothes there, and the cloth which had been about the head, which was not with the clothes, but folded, and laid aside separately. Then the other disciple, who had arrived first at the sepulchre, entered, and he saw and believed; and the disciples then returned home. (John xx. 2-10.)

Thus, according to the narrative of Luke, although what Mary Magdalene had told them appeared to them both to be an idle tale, and they did not believe it, Peter rose up and ran to the tomb, and stooping down (as John, who arrived there before him had done) to look in before entering,

he only saw the linen clothes on the ground, and he returned (after going into the sepulchre), wondering in himself at what had happened. (Luke xxiv. 12.)

But Mary Magdalene (who had returned to the tomb with Peter and John) remained outside, weeping; and as she wept, she stooped down to look into the tomb, and saw two angels clothed in white, sitting in the place where the body of Jesus had lain, one at the head and the other at the feet. They said to her, "Woman, why weepest thou?" and she answered, "They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him." After thus speaking, she turned back, and saw Jesus close by, but without knowing that it was Jesus; and he then said, "Woman, why weepest thou? whom dost thou seek?" She thought it was the gardener, and answered, "Sir, if you have buried him, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away." Jesus said, "Mary," and she immediately turned to him, and said, "Rabboni," that is, "My Master." Jesus responded, "Do not touch me, for I am not yet ascended to my Father; but go to find my brethren, and tell them from me, I ascend to my Father and to your Father; to my God, and to your God." Thus, according to the narrative of Mark, Jesus having arisen early in the morning of the first day of the week, appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had cast seven devils. (Mark xvi. 9.)

Mary Magdalene parted from the other women to run to Peter and John, to relate the appearance of Jesus to those who were then in mourning and sorrow (Mark xvi. 10); but she afterwards rejoined them; and then Jesus appeared to them, saying, "Hail," and they approached and embraced his feet, and did homage to him. Then Jesus said "Fear not, but go and tell my brethren to go into Galilee, and they shall see me there" (Matth. xxviii. 9, 10).

While they were going, some of the guard came into the city, and related to the chief priests all that had happened. The latter then consulted with the elders, and gave the soldiers a large sum of money, saying, "Say that his dis-

ciples came by night and stole him while you slept; and if the governor should hear of this, we will persuade him and secure you." The soldiers took the money, and reported what they were told; and this report is still current among the Jews. (Matth. xxviii. 11-15.)

When the women came to the disciples, Mary Magdalene related the two appearances of Jesus, and all that they had seen and heard. It is because she alone related the events that she alone is mentioned in the narratives of Mark and John, which are incomplete on account of the details being omitted. Thus Mary Magdalene came to tell the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and what he had said (John xx. 18); and she went to relate the story to those who had been with him, and who were in mourning and sorrow; but when they heard that he was alive, and that she had seen him, they did not believe her.

Such is the complete narrative, when the events related separately by each of the Evangelists have been placed in order.

The great earthquake was a motion imparted to the locality where the women and the guards were; and their terror, and ignorance of fluidic phenomena led them to ascribe it to an earthquake. This manifestation, which may seem puerile to sceptics, was designed to strike the guards of the tomb with consternation, and to give more effect to the prodigy in their eyes, when they saw that the approaching women shared their terror. It also rendered the narrative which they gave to the high priests, and which was subsequently recorded by the Evangelists, more impressive. The shock took place simultaneously with the removal of the stone, and these phenomena were effected by spirits in obedience to the will of the angel, or superior spirit. The shaking of the ground, and the unsealing and removal of the stone, by the attractive force of the necessary fluids, will be no more surprising to those who are aware of the effects which the spirits of the Lord can produce, than the opening of Peter's prison doors, and the falling off of his chains.*

* Acts v. 18, 19, 21, 23; xii. 3-10.

As for those who deny these events, their time will come, and the light will shine upon them; but we are not yet sent to them. You must not try to make a prejudiced man abandon his opinions by violence, but must wait till he opens his eyes to the light of his own free will, with the aid of time and reincarnation. We are sent to willing labourers, and we refresh the thirsty lands, however dry and hard; but we leave it to time to pulverise those rocks which are so hard as to resist our efforts at present. It is our mission to prepare the scattered materials and to collect and arrange them for him who shall be the architect of the Temple of the Future, who will lay the solid foundations of your beliefs. Do not try to penetrate the meaning of our words; they will be understood in due time; but we shall say no more now. As yet you are only unskilled workmen, but still you are useful for the work of the future. Do not let yourselves be discouraged, for your efforts will be repulsed, and received with sarcasm and ridicule; but press onwards, and offer a refuge to those who have been torn from their opinions, and know not where to seek for hope and consolation. Hold out to them the torch whose feeble ray may aid them to advance towards the light which shall leave no shade behind it.

The appearance of angels or spirits to the women, and afterwards to Mary Magdalene alone, were simply visible and audible appearances; for the women were seeing and hearing mediums, and received what was communicated to them by the spirits.

You need not be surprised at the repetitions of the angels in insisting on what had been said to the women, both before and after they entered the tomb. The suddenness and strangeness of the phenomena had thrown them into great consternation and profound trouble. They were simple, ignorant, unaffected, and loving, and their minds were filled with conflicting emotions. Was it not needful to reassure them, console them, and fix in their memory all that they were to report to the disciples? Did they not leave the tomb with fear and great joy, as soon as they had

heard the words of the two angels, and fly from it in such fear and trembling that they said nothing to anyone, so great was their terror?

The first appearance of Jesus to Mary Magdalene was a simply visible apparition ; audible, but intangible. Mary did not recognise Jesus, because he did not at first appear to her under the figure in which she had previously beheld him, and he addressed her in a voice which she did not know. Then Jesus resumed the same voice that Mary had often heard, which arrested her attention, and caused her to turn towards him a second time ; and then Jesus showed her the figure of the Master. At that time, he forbade her to touch him, for she would have clasped emptiness, the apparition being impalpable to man. These are phenomena which have taken place in all ages, according to the course of the laws of nature ; and there is nothing surprising about them. Those who are initiated in spiritual science know that even the inferior spirits can make themselves visible to seeing and hearing mediums ; and Mary Magdalene was gifted with both faculties.

Jesus acted thus when he first appeared to Mary, and availed himself of her trouble and surprise, to prepare her to recognise him, and to fix the impression of his appearance, and the memory of the words which she was to report upon her mind. This first appearance prepared the way for the second appearance to her and to the other women. This was a visible, tangible, and audible apparition. Jesus presented himself before them, visible, and tangible, as they had known him, and clothed in a similar manner. Just as the appearances of stone, hail, snow, rain, and other similar substances materially resemble the objects which they represent to the eyes of the medium, so, when a spirit makes himself tangible under material conditions, he assumes a clothed appearance, needful to establish his identity, and gives it the appearance and consistency of matter itself, as he does to his body. It is not more difficult to combine the fluids which assume the form and colour of human fabrics than to combine those which constitute the body. It is not

a preconceived idea of the medium, but the knowledge of an object which he not only remembers but believes to be a reality, when he has medianimically seen or heard anything, if he should be ignorant of his faculties.

Spiritual science explains all the phenomena of the apparitions produced by Jesus at the time of his successive appearances. Cannot even the inferior spirits produce the like? Do you suppose that the Christ could not have produced them by means of the fluidic body, which he reassumed for his reappearance or "resurrection," and which he could render tangible or intangible at pleasure?

We call your attention to the words of Jesus when he first appeared to Mary Magdalene, and upon his second appearance to her and the other women. They expressly exclude the divinity which men have attributed to him, while they correspond with all the other words which he pronounced under the veil of the letter, respecting his origin; the powers which he derived from his Father and your Father; from his God and your God; and the place whence he descended among men, and to which he must return. Under the veil of the letter, they contain one of the elements designed to form the basis of the New Revelation, which is now sent to teach you "who is the Son."

"I have not yet ascended to my Father," said Jesus to Mary Magdalene.

"I am still among men," risen again, "and living."

"Go and tell my brethren from me, I ascend to my Father and your Father; my God and your God; tell my brethren to go to Galilee, and they shall see me there."

He calls his disciples his brethren, and thus proclaims that he is not the Uncreated Creator, but a creature; sprung from the same Father and the same God as the disciples, and all men, having had the same origin, at his creation as a spiritual essence.* He prepared his disciples for the event of his "ascension," and indicated the place where he who was the Son of God by his perfect purity; he who is above

* Compare what was said, vol. i. §§ 35-60, pp. 104-146, on the genealogy of Jesus, and on the origin of the spirit.

all, and descended from heaven should ascend again to heaven.

Meditate on the visit of the women to the tomb, and on the apparitions of angels, or superior spirits, to them, and the words spoken both before and after their entering the tomb. Reflect on the renewed appearance of angels to Mary Magdalene, who was weeping outside the tomb ; on the words spoken to her, the appearances of Jesus to her and the other women, and upon his spoken words. Let all reflect upon them, when they perceive the moment of death approaching, which still appears so cruel to man. Let these thoughts make it easy for you to resign to the earth the body which must return to it ; you will find your tomb opened to give passage to your spirit, which rises radiant towards heaven, its true country ; heaven, which is the boundless space around you, where you will find renewed and endless activity, life, and love.

And you who visit the tombs to shed over your dead ones the perfume of the soul which flows from your eyes, O weep no more, but look before you, and you will behold a radiant angel guarding the entrance to the tomb ; and if you listen attentively, you will hear a friendly voice saying, "Do not weep ; him whom you seek is not here ; he is gone before you, and you will soon go to regain him, and he will soon reappear to your eyes." O believe, believe and hope, all you who are oppressed with grief ; you who love those who are dear to you, believe and press onwards with confidence, for you will soon see them again.

The facts relative to the guards entering the city, and reporting the events to the chief priests, and the decision arrived at by the priests and elders in council, are historically true, and tend to confirm the reality of the violent shaking of the ground, the unsealing and overturning of the stone, and the disappearance of the body from the tomb after the stone had been rolled away. The report of the guards to the priests was as follows :—"You and the Pharisees sealed the stone, after satisfying yourselves that the body was still there ; the ground shook ; the stone was

unsealed, overturned, and rolled away by invisible hands; and when the tomb was thus opened, the body was no longer there; the linen clothes were on the ground, and the napkin which had been tied round the head of Jesus was folded separately."

The soldiers regarded these events as miraculous,* for the unsealing and removal of the stone took place without any human agency, and the body, which resembled a human body like yours, could not have disappeared if it had been still there at the time when the stone was sealed by the chief priests and Pharisees. The tomb was not like a modern tomb, but was merely an excavation hewn out of the solid rock, where the body was laid on a stone, according to the Hebrew custom of interring bodies in such an excavation, either natural or artificial.

If the chief priests and elders had not been persuaded of the truth of the report, would they not have accused the soldiers of treachery, instead of offering them a sum of money to keep silence? But they were overcome with terror; and those who had not hesitated (as they believed) to shed the "blood" of the Just One, dared not accuse the soldiers. They knew that if they threw any responsibility on the soldiers they would only give the events themselves greater publicity, and they preferred to hush up this most serious affair, since the events justified the prophetic words of Jesus, and confirmed his mission. Pilate had no interest in the matter, and made no further inquiries. The soldiers were not bribed to make their story publicly known, but only to explain any reports of the Resurrection which might be spread about, by saying, "His disciples came and stole the body by night while we slept." But this story was less than an imposture, for it is refuted by its very absurdity, as we will show you presently.

As regards the incredulity of the disciples, there were such material difficulties in the way of the escape of Jesus

* Would you not still consider them so yourselves, without the New Revelation?

from the tomb that they could not believe it, for they only understood the Resurrection as the return of the spirit into a material human body like your own. When they heard the reports of Mary Magdalene and the other women, they supposed that it was a dream; nor did they believe when Mary Magdalene told them that Jesus was still alive, and that she had seen him.

John went to the tomb with Peter, and when he saw the empty tomb, the linen clothes lying on the ground, and the napkin which had been tied over the head of Jesus, folded separately, he believed. Peter, who had seen as much as John, "returned, wondering in himself what had happened," and trying to find some explanation of these inexplicable events. The other disciples, who had seen nothing, and put no faith in the story of the women, remained incredulous.

The New Revelation gives you the explanation of the Resurrection of Christ, which has hitherto remained incomprehensible to mankind. The Spirit enlightens the darkness of the letter, and shows all the events recorded in the Gospel in luminous harmony, from the moment when the angel announced the appearance of Jesus on your earth to Mary and Joseph, till the close of his earthly mission at the time called the "Ascension," when he finally withdrew from the eyes of men. The presence of Jesus among you was a spiritual apparition as regards yourselves; for his body was constructed on fluidic principles, entirely apart from your organisation, but in harmony with his spiritual nature, and also relatively in harmony with your sphere, that it might exist sufficiently long for the completion of his earthly mission. The perispritic body which Jesus left on the cross, and which Joseph of Arimathæa laid in the tomb, remained there until the stone had been sealed by the chief priests and Pharisees in the presence of the Roman soldiers who were appointed to guard the tomb, and who aided in the work. After this, the presence of the body in the tomb was no longer necessary, and Jesus caused it to lose its tangibility, but retained its constituent elements ready to reunite at will, as had frequently happened before, when he was

supposed to have retired into solitude to pray ; whereas, in truth, his spirit was soaring above your universe, directing all things, and dispensing the orders of the Sovereign Master. Thus the body of Jesus (not a material human body like yours, but a fluidic perispritic body) disappeared from the tomb cut in the rock ; but if the stone had been unsealed before the third day for the chief priests and Pharisees to see if the body was still there, Jesus would have caused it to reappear. He had left it on the cross, bearing every appearance of actual death, and had withdrawn it from the tomb into the fluidic state. But if needful, he would have restored it to the tomb under the same appearance which it presented when Joseph of Arimathæa laid it there, and when the stone was first sealed.

Reflecting men do not regard Revelation as a system by which others try to impose on their credulity, but as a light held up before the human mind. This Revelation will meet with much opposition at first ; but the more men study the question seriously, and understand its necessity, the more they will perceive that no other explanation is conceivable.

If you suppose that Jesus was clothed with a material human body, and suffered real death, the Resurrection becomes wholly incredible, whether regarded as corporeal, by the return of the spirit to a human corpse, or simply as the appearance of a spirit which has irrevocably quitted its earthly perishable body by death. It was needful for the Apostles to believe in a corporeal resurrection, for it was the only resurrection which they could understand ; besides, it was possible in their eyes, according to the intelligence, prejudice, and traditions of the age. Jesus appeared to them to be clothed with a body like their own, and his death had been real ; the corpse was laid in the tomb by Joseph of Arimathæa, and the stone which closed it was sealed by the chief priests and Pharisees, and placed under the guard of Roman soldiers. On the morning of the third day, the stone was unsealed and overturned, and the body was then no longer in the tomb. How could it have disappeared ? How could Jesus, who appeared to them

to be clothed in a material human body like their own, even if resuscitated, escape from the sealed tomb hewn in the rock?

The problem was incomprehensible, and they were therefore incredulous, but it was necessary that their incredulity should be overcome, or how could they have been Apostles? How could the Apostleship of Paul, the Apostle of the Gentiles, have taken place? And what would have resulted from the earthly mission of the Master, the Messenger from Heaven?

Jesus gave them all the proofs which were necessary to convince them. These facts were useful at a time when the belief in a corporeal resurrection could alone be understood and accepted; but it was left to the future to explain the events more fully, and the imperfect light shining through the veil of the letter has prepared humanity for the brightness of the present Revelation.

The disciples still remained incredulous, and regarded the narrative of the women as a dream, and did not believe that Jesus was alive and risen again; but were nevertheless impressed by the report. The appearance of Jesus to Peter, and then to the two disciples on the road to Emmaus, and the report of what he had said, staggered their incredulity; but they did not yet believe. Jesus appeared several times to themselves, and they were finally convinced by the evidence which he offered them, and which Luke and John have recorded in their Gospels. As the disciples were ignorant of the nature of the body of Jesus they believed in a corporeal resurrection. The event was thus above reason, and everything which appeared impossible to them was regarded as a miracle, which they no longer endeavoured either to understand or to explain. They were finally convinced of the truth of the Resurrection when they saw Jesus rise up to heaven at the time of the Ascension.

All that took place was necessary to enable the mission of Jesus to bear its fruits in the present and in the future. The belief of the Apostles was also necessary, for men were then given what they and future generations were able to

bear, until the advent of the new era. This belief of the Apostles was useful to serve as the foundation of all the controversies which followed ; and which, although they now give rise only to blind faith or incredulity, have prepared the minds of men to receive the New Revelation. The resurrection of Jesus was supposed to be corporeal, by the return of the spirit of Jesus to a dead body. This opinion was transitory, like all other human interpretations ; but it has borne its fruits. At present, the progress which you have attained makes this opinion a palpable error. It is wholly inadmissible, for it is both contrary to the laws of nature, and to all the facts recorded in the Gospels ; which, when illuminated by the light of spiritual science, serve as the basis of the New Revelation, which explains the nature of the Resurrection of Jesus, which took place by means of a body formed, independently of any human agency, by the application and appropriation of other laws of nature than those which govern your planet.

Natural laws are as immutable as the will of God, who has established them from all eternity, and never departs from them. According to these laws, when the spirit has left the material human body, which constitutes its life to human eyes, by real death, the body becomes a corpse, and irrevocably belongs to the earth ; and the spirit cannot live a bodily life again, except by reincarnation. Thus, if Jesus had been clothed in a human body like yours, it would have been impossible for him to have "risen again;" or reappeared again, living a corporeal life in a body which had become a corpse by real death. It would also have been impossible for this body, whether dead or alive, to have disappeared from the tomb while the stone which closed it was sealed. And with such a body, it would have been impossible for Jesus to have disappeared from the eyes of the two disciples who were going to Emmaus, while he was at table with them ; and it would have been equally impossible for him to have penetrated into the midst of his disciples while the door of the room where they were assembled was closed from fear of the Jews.

If Jesus had been clothed in such a body, how could he have passed through the midst of the enraged Jews, who had dragged him to the precipice on which the city of Nazareth was built, to cast him down? Or how could he have escaped from the Jews who were assembled round him in the Temple in the court of Solomon, and who were about to stone him? But all this, which would have been impossible with an earthly body like yours, was both possible and natural with a fluidic body, which Jesus could render visible or invisible and tangible or intangible at will. The nature of the body of Jesus, which is now revealed to you, explains everything according to spiritual science. It explains what took place on the mountain of Nazareth, what happened in the Temple in the Court of Solomon; the phenomena attending the Resurrection; the disappearance of the body from the tomb and the various subsequent appearances of Jesus.

If the Resurrection is regarded simply as the appearance of a spirit which had left a material human body like yours by actual death, the supposition is equally untenable. According to this view, the body of Jesus was of the same nature as yours; and was in the state of a corpse. Had such been the case it would have been impossible for it to have disappeared from the sealed tomb. But it was no longer there when the stone was unsealed and rolled away. It had disappeared; and the mere fact of its disappearance shows the impossibility of such a theory.

Had the corpse been in the tomb when the stone was unsealed and rolled away it would certainly have remained in the power of the Roman soldiers and the chief priests, and would have been shown to the people, the Apostles, and the disciples who had been imposed upon by the successive apparitions, and who were proclaiming the resurrection of the Master. All would then have regarded Jesus as an imposter who had promised to rise again, and had not done so. What would have been the fate of the Apostles? Would they have persisted in maintaining the reality of the Resurrection of their Master with their last breath, in the midst

of tortures? And what would have resulted from the earthly mission of Jesus?

Had the body of Jesus been of the same nature as yours, it must either have remained in the hands of the Roman soldiers and the chief priests, or have been conveyed away. But the supposition of the body having been carried away contradicts all the events related or implied in the Gospels concerning the presence of the body in the tomb when the stone was sealed; its subsequent disappearance; and the so-called Resurrection.

The body could not have been taken away. It is absurd to suppose that the disciples could have removed it, and why should the chief priests, Pharisees, and elders have done so?

If the disciples, or any others had removed the body, they could only have done so either after Joseph of Arimathæa laid it in the tomb, and before the stone was sealed; or afterwards. We have already shown that the body could not have been removed after it was laid in the tomb, and before the sealing of the stone. Again, it would have been impossible to have carried off the body in defiance of the soldiers who were appointed to guard the tomb, and of the sentinel who was always on the watch; and the idea of its having been removed while all the soldiers were asleep, is not only impossible, but absurd.

Could it have been removed by connivance with the soldiers? But their military duty, honour, and responsibility would have set an insuperable obstacle in the way of such a grievous dereliction from their duty on the part of the Roman soldiers. And how could the disciples, who were poor fishermen, without refuge or necessities for themselves, bribe the Roman soldiers, and calculate on their discretion and participation when, if they could have been corrupted, they might have obtained a very large reward from the chief priests, elders, and Pharisees, if they could have proved that the body of Jesus was carried off by human hands?

Would not the disciples who looked for a corporeal resurrection, have made themselves the authors or accomplices of an imposture if they had falsely asserted the reality

of the Resurrection, and of all the circumstantial details connected with it? Would they have maintained their faith to the last gasp, and in the midst of tortures, when it was based upon a lie, if they had themselves carried off the corpse and buried it secretly?

At whatever time, and in whatever manner, you suppose the disciples to have removed the body, the idea of their doing so refutes itself by its very absurdity.

Again, would the disciples have run the serious risk of attempting to corrupt the soldiers with money, when they had no motive or interest in doing so? Had the soldiers been capable of corruption, they would have taken the money, and then obtained another and larger reward by asserting that the body of Jesus had been removed by human hands, and even by following, watching, and delivering over the authors of the theft to the chief priests, Pharisees, and elders?

Had the body been removed by the chief priests and Pharisees, they would have done so, not to destroy it, but to confound the pretensions of the disciples and their Master; for it would have been more to their interest to preserve it as a convincing piece of evidence. They might have removed the body to prevent the disciples from taking it away; but only with the object of showing it to the people afterwards; for all men regarded the body of Jesus as an earthly body like yours. They would have shown it, if the disciples had sought to spread the report of the resurrection, to unmask the imposture, and as a sure weapon against the enemies of their faith. Did they pursue the disciples as the propagators of error among the people, and convict them of a lie? No; they bribed the soldiers to throw the blame of the disappearance of the body upon them; but did they even persecute the disciples on the charge of having violated the tomb? They did not; but it was certainly neither indulgence nor magnanimity which stayed the hands of the judges in Israel, but terror; for they were fully convinced that the body could not have been removed; and yet it had disappeared!

The entire series of these events is brought into perfect harmony when the truth is revealed. The New Revelation leaves no further problem to be solved in regard to this, and the suggestion that the body of Jesus was an earthly body, like yours, and that the angels or superior spirits might have rendered it invisible, and carried it away at the moment when the stone was unsealed, would be *à priori* untenable, on account of the revelation which the angel gave to Mary and Joseph; for this revelation would then be false, and could not have emanated from a messenger of God. But this Revelation should not be rejected, but explained in accordance with the laws of Nature, and according to the Spirit which giveth life instead of the letter which killeth.

MARK, CHAP. XVI.—VERSES 12-13. LUKE, CHAP. XXIV.—VERSES 13-35.

Appearance of Jesus to the two Disciples.

Mark xvi. (12) After these things he appeared to two of them as they were walking, in another form, as they were going into the country. (13) And these went and related it to the others; neither did they believe them.

Luke xxiv. (13) And behold two of them were going on the same day to a village called Emmaus about a hundred and sixty stadia from Jerusalem. (14) And they conversed together about all these things which had happened. (15) And it came to pass that as they were conversing and debating, Jesus himself also drew near, and walked with them. (16) But their eyes were holden, that they should not recognize him. (17) And he said to them, What are these words which you exchange with each other as you walk, and are sad? (18) And one of them who was named Cleophas answered, and said to him, Dost thou dwell alone in Jerusalem, and dost not know what has happened there in these days? (19) And he said to them, What things? And they said to him, The things concerning Jesus of Nazareth, who was a man, a prophet, powerful in deed and word before God and all the people? (20) And how our chief priests and rulers delivered him up to be sentenced to death, and have crucified him. (21) But we hoped that it was he who was about to redeem Israel. And beside all, this is the third day since these things were done. (22) And besides, certain women of our country have astonished us, who were early at the tomb. (23) And not having found his body, they came, saying that they had also seen a vision of angels, who said that he is alive. (24) And some of those with us went to the tomb, and found it to be as the women said; but they did not see him. (25) And he said to them, O inconsiderate men, and slow in heart to believe all that the prophets have

APPEARANCE OF JESUS TO THE TWO DISCIPLES. 435

spoken ! (26) Ought not Christ to suffer these things, and to enter into his glory ? (27) And beginning from Moses and all the prophets, he expounded to them the things concerning himself in all the writings. (28) And they drew near to the village where they were going, and he made as though he were going further. (29) And they constrained him, saying, Remain with us, for it is towards evening, and the day is declining ; and he went in to stay with them. (30) And it came to pass that as he was reclining with them, he took the loaf, and blessed it, and having broken it, gave it to them. (31) And their eyes were opened, and they knew him, and he became invisible to them. (32) And they said to each other, Did not our heart burn in us as he spoke to us on the way, and expounded to us the writings ? (33) And they arose that very hour, and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven assembled, and those with them, saying, (34) The Lord is risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon. (35) And they related what had happened on the way, and how he was known to them by the breaking of bread.

§ 305. The appearance of Jesus to the two disciples, who were seeing and hearing mediums, was simply visible, tangible, and audible. You are told that their eyes were holden, that they should not recognize him. This means that Jesus appeared to them with other lineaments than those under which they had known him. It was only while he was at table with him that their eyes were opened, and they knew him ; for the figure of the Master appeared to them, and Christ showed himself as they had seen and known him.

We have already explained the audible voice (p. 423), in speaking of the appearance of Jesus to Mary Magdalene and the other women. Was it not easy for Jesus to cause the disciples to hear the discourse which he addressed to them, without his having recourse to spoken words, and yet causing them to bear it so distinctly that they supposed they received it through their outward senses ? Such phenomena are well known. You feel that you have been touched, and yet no material hand has been laid upon you. You often hear a noise, which has not been produced by any material object near you.

The two disciples were not only seeing but hearing mediums, and being ignorant of their medianimic faculties, received the impression of the words of Jesus, and thought that they had heard them spoken, just as you think you hear in your sleep. It would have been useless to employ

spoken words, when the other method, which was better adapted to the disposition of the disciples, was sufficient.

Jesus conversed with them before making himself known, in the matter-of-fact manner which preceded his recognition, and then at the moment that they recognized him, he took bread, and blessed it, and instantly disappeared from their eyes without saying anything more. He acted thus to make a stronger impression on them, and to fix his words more deeply in their memory.

There are only two points in this interview to which it is necessary to direct your attention specially: Jesus said that it was necessary for Christ to suffer all these things, and then to enter into his glory. These words relate to the humanity which was attributed to him. The two disciples, like the Apostles and the people at that time, looked upon Jesus as a man like themselves, "a prophet mighty in word and deed before God and man." Men were afterwards to attribute divinity to him; and this belief was to last until the spiritual nature and origin of Jesus, which was veiled by the letter, should be revealed by the New Revelation. Jesus was unknown by men till the day of his resurrection, but he then made them feel his power and protection; and it was only after this event that his name, and especially the blessings which he conferred on men, became known throughout the world. If Jesus had entered immediately, and without waiting to be asked, he would equally have impressed the imagination of the disciples by what was to follow; but by attempting to proceed, he tested their charity towards a stranger who was liable to be overtaken by night, and thus gave men a lesson and an example. In order to make himself known when he broke the bread, Jesus gave his fluidic body the human characteristics which the disciples knew, and restored its tangibility under this new form. In disappearing from their eyes, he again ceased his tangibility, and his body became fluidic and invisible to them, and returned to space, until the time of his next appearance. The whole transaction took place instantaneously while the Master was at table with the disciples.

The manner in which Jesus broke the bread reminded them of what he had already done in their presence ; and it was at this moment that he suddenly resumed his former appearance.

The appearance of Jesus to Peter took place while Peter was returning from the tomb, and it was then that he sought for the solution of the incomprehensible problem of his vision. It was a simple apparition ; for Jesus appeared and disappeared instantaneously before the eyes of Peter, who was a seeing medium.

MARK, CHAP. XVI.—VERSE 14. LUKE, CHAP.
XXIV.—VERSES 36-49.

Appearance of Jesus to the Apostles.

Mark xvi. (14) Lastly he appeared to the eleven as they were seated, and reproached them for their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they did not believe those who had seen him after he was arisen.

Luke xxiv. (36) And while they were speaking of these things, Jesus himself stood in their midst, and saith to them, Peace be with you. (37) And they were alarmed and terrified, and thought that they beheld a spirit. (38) And he said to them, Why are ye alarmed, and wherefore do doubts arise in your hearts? (39) Behold my hands and my feet, for it is I myself; feel me and look at me; for a spirit has not flesh and bones, as ye see me have.* (40) And saying this, he showed them his hands and his feet. (41) And as they could not yet believe for joy, and wondered, he said to them, Have you anything eatable here? (42) And they gave him a piece of broiled fish and some honeycomb. (43) And he took them, and ate in their presence. (44) And he said to them, These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all those things must be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moses and the Prophets and Psalms about me. (45) Then he opened their understanding, that they might understand the writings. (46) And he said to them, Thus it is written, and thus it was needful for the Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead on the third day. (47) And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. (48) And you are the witnesses of these things. (49) And behold I send the promise of my Father upon you, and you shall remain in the city of Jerusalem until you shall be clothed with power from on high.

§ 306. There is nothing in the actions of Jesus which should surprise you. Was it not necessary for him to strengthen men in their belief in the material existence of

* One of the early Christian writers gives an important variation of this passage : " I am not a spirit without body."—TRANSL.

his body? Was it not needful for him to impress them more deeply with the gratitude which his "sacrifice" should inspire, by bringing it within reach of the intelligence of material men?

Had Jesus made known his spiritual origin, and showed himself to the disciples only under a fluidic appearance, these superstitious men would have been frightened. They would have remembered the prohibition to invoke the dead, and would have thought that they had broken the laws of Moses. Jesus would then have been classed among the spectres which issue from their tombs, and would have equally been regarded as human; but their minds were impressed by a tangibility of the causes of which they were ignorant. Jesus, therefore, gave them all the proofs which were necessary to convince them, even taking food, which disappeared in the manner which we have already explained.

Supposing Jesus had revealed himself to men as he was, what explanations would not have been needed; and what would have been the consequences? What a dangerous weapon would have been placed in the hands of men by spiritual science, of which you still make so bad a use! It was needful that faith should be blind, until the eyes of the soul should be strong enough to bear the light.

Here, as in all similar cases, the Gospel narratives explain and complete each other, and those of Mark and Luke should not be isolated from that of John (xx. 19-29). Mark confines himself to stating the fact of the appearance of Jesus to the eleven Apostles, without detailing the circumstances and manner of the successive appearances which preceded his "ascension." Luke gives an account of the first appearance to the Apostles, before John wrote; but he has omitted the appearance which took place eight days afterwards in the presence of Thomas; and this led him to assert that the eleven Apostles were present. Thomas, indeed, saw the Master like the ten other Apostles; but, as John relates, he only saw him at his second appearance. But these trifling variations in the narratives have no bearing on the work of regeneration which Jesus came to accomplish.

The words recorded by Mark (xvi. 14) relate generally to the incredulity with which the eleven Apostles received the story of Mary Magdalene and the other women, and the two disciples ; and more especially to Thomas, on account of his incredulity when he heard the story of the other Apostles.

There are two points to which we must call your attention. Jesus appeared in the midst of the disciples while the doors of their place of meeting were closed from fear of the Jews. He therefore entered with his fluidic body, as happens in cases of the appearance of spirits, and when he made himself visible to all, he instantaneously rendered it tangible.

Although the disciples were ignorant of the existence and causes of tangibility, they knew of the apparitions of spirits. At the moment when Jesus appeared to them they were influenced by the narrative of the appearances of Jesus which had already taken place ; and when he suddenly appeared in the midst of them while the doors were closed, they were seized with terror and amazement, and doubted in their minds whether it was really Jesus who had risen from the dead, or if it was the appearance of a spirit, which, to their minds, excluded the idea of any resurrection. Thus Jesus did not confine himself to words, but gave them all the proofs necessary to convince them of the reality of the facts. It was needful for him to act thus for the interests of the present, and to leave it to the future Revelation, to explain the spiritual phenomena which took place at the time of that appearance, and the nature of the body which he assumed for his earthly mission.

The words of Jesus recorded by Luke (xxiv. 49) are veiled by the letter. The Master promised that he would soon send the Apostles, under the visible form of tongues of fire, the superior spirits who were to aid them in their mission ; and that after he had left them by rising to heaven, and disappearing finally from human eyes, they must return to Jerusalem, and remain there until they should be clothed with this power from on high.

MATTHEW, CHAP. XXVIII.—VERSES 16–20. MARK,
CHAP. XVI.—VERSES 15–20. LUKE, CHAP. XXIV.

VERSES 50–53.

The Ascension.

Matth. xxviii. (16) And the eleven disciples went forth into Galilee to the mountain where Jesus had appointed them. (17) And seeing him, they did obeisance to him ; but they doubted. (18) And Jesus came up to them, and spoke to them, saying, All authority is given to me in heaven and earth. (19) Go, therefore, and teach all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. (20) Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you. And behold I am with you every day until the consummation of the age. Amen.

Mark xvi. (15) And he said to them, Go forth into the whole world, and preach the Gospel to every creature. (16) He who believes and is baptised shall be saved ; but he who does not believe shall be condemned. (17) And these signs shall follow those who believe. In my name shall they cast out devils ; they shall speak with new tongues ; (18) They shall lift up serpents, and if they shall drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them ; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall come forth well. (19) Then the Lord, after he had spoken to them, was received up into heaven, and sat down on the right hand of God. (20) And these went forth, and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with the signs which followed. Amen.

Luke xxiv. (50) And he led them out as far as Bethany, and lifted up his hands and blessed them, (51) And it came to pass that while he was blessing them he was separated from them, and taken up into heaven. (52) And they did obeisance to him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy. (53) And they were constantly in the Temple, praising and blessing God.

§ 307. After the second appearance to the disciples when Thomas was with them (John xx. 24–29), Jesus took them out as far as Bethany, and raised his hands and blessed them (Luke xxiv. 50), and it was there that he directed them to go to Galilee, to the mountain where they were to see him (Matth. xxviii. 16), and thus it happened that as he was blessing them, he was separated from them (in Galilee), and seeing him, they did obeisance to him, and he was raised up to heaven ; after which they returned to Jerusalem with great joy (Luke xxiv. 51, 53 ; Matth. xxviii. 17).

It was while the disciples were travelling from different points towards Galilee, that Jesus appeared on the shores

of the Lake of Tiberias to Simon Peter, Thomas, called Didymus, Nathaniel, who was from Cana in Galilee; the sons of Zebedee, and two other disciples, who were together, and had gone fishing.

The words recorded by Matthew (xxviii. 18-20) and Mark (xvi. 15-19) were spoken on the mountain; and Jesus afterwards raised his hands and blessed the disciples; and while blessing them was lifted up to heaven (Mark xvi. 19; Luke xxiv. 50-51).

Then, as Luke says (v. 52), (though he and the other Evangelists omitted what passed after the ascension of Jesus,* which was to be recorded in the Acts of the Apostles), the disciples, after doing homage to Jesus, returned to Jerusalem. The details of their return (except their standing on the Mount of Olives, which was mentioned afterwards†) were unimportant, and not worth recording for the instruction of future generations.

The Evangelists did not relate in detail all the various appearances of Jesus, any more than all the actions which he performed; but only those which were needful for the results which were to spring from the Master's earthly mission. John has told you as much (xx. 30; xxi. 35).

It was needful to inform men, in addition to what was recorded in the Gospels, that Jesus appeared to the Apostles during forty days,‡ speaking to them of the kingdom of God.

You are told (Matth. xxviii. 17), that when the eleven Apostles saw Jesus on the mountain, they did homage to him, and yet they doubted. But you must understand that these last words do not apply to the Apostles, who were then all convinced, and who did homage to Jesus when they saw him. The Apostles did not go to the mountain alone, but were followed by a multitude of others; and it was some of these who doubted, knowing nothing of the "resurrection" of Jesus, and of his successive appearances, except from hearsay. But what they were then about to see and hear

* Acts i. 10, 11.

† Acts i. 12.

‡ Acts i. 3.

would confirm all that they had heard, in the most startling manner. Their doubts were to be dispelled, and they were about to receive the faith which already animated the Apostles.

Jesus drew near, and addressed all the disciples, saying, "All power is given to me in heaven and on earth." These words, spiritually interpreted, allude to his position as the protector and ruler of your planet, who is entrusted with all power over incarnate and errant spirits.

(Matth. xxviii. 19-20.)—Baptism in the name of the Father is an invocation addressed to the Supreme Being, who governs all the universes in infinity and eternity. Baptism in the name of the Son calls attention to him who watches over the fate of your planet; the Son of God by his perfect purity, and your Master by his power. In the name of the Holy spirit it appeals to the secret intelligence proceeding from the Creator, and manifested towards you by the good spirits, who teach you justice, love and charity, which include all virtues and all duties. They inspire you to practise them, and thus bring you light and truth by medianimic inspiration and communication.

We have just mentioned the good spirits. By the Holy Spirit you must understand good spirits of every class, and of every degree of elevation in the spiritual hierarchy. Evil inspirations or communications cannot proceed from any good spirit.

When the good spirits are not sufficiently elevated to give you the amount of light and knowledge which you ought to receive, they are aided by spirits more elevated than themselves; and these again are aided by spirits superior to themselves in the spiritual hierarchy. The inspiration which flows from God through the pure spirits, who receive it directly, is thus transmitted to you in the descending scale; or else the good spirits make way for those who are more elevated than themselves, and sufficiently so for the necessities of the case. Good spirits, whatever their rank in the spiritual hierarchy, are always the organs of truth relative to the

intelligence of man in proportion to what he is able to receive and to understand. The evil and inferior spirits of darkness alone teach men error and falsehood, with the object of deceiving them.

Baptism was the material sign which was to unite the Christians. The baptism which Jesus directed his disciples to confer on men was both that of water and of the Holy Spirit. The baptism of water was only to be given, as a symbol, to the adult who was responsible for his actions ; and the baptism of the Holy Spirit was to follow according to the merit of the neophyte. In such a case, the baptisers always invoked the aid of the good spirits, under the name of the Holy Spirit. The baptism of water was a transitory and material sign, round which the Christians could rally themselves, under the reign of the letter, which was to be preliminary to the advent of the Spirit. It was intended afterwards to give place to the baptism of the Spirit only, which man can obtain for himself, with the aid, protection, and inspiration of the good spirits, by constantly endeavouring to practise everything which Jesus commanded, in spirit, and in truth.

The words of Jesus, " Behold I am with you always, even to the end of the age," relate to his mission as the protecting and ruling spirit of your earth ; a mission which began with the formation of your globe, and which shall last for ages of ages. Thus these words included the present and the future. They applied in the first instance to his earthly mission ; they apply to your own days, and will continue to be applicable in future (apart from all external religions), to all men who constantly endeavour to practise love towards the Creator, and love of the neighbour as oneself, for then and then only are men truly disciples of Jesus.

The mission which Jesus gave his disciples, to go among all nations, and teach them to observe all things, whatsoever he had commanded them, was not a monopoly or the exclusive privilege of anybody at that time, and never ought to be made so, either in your own days, or in future. The

thought of Jesus, in spirit and in truth, appeals to all well-intentioned men, and has as little to do with any outward forms of worship as with their costumes. It invites them to instruct all nations in everything relating to the progress of the spirit, whether moral, physical, or intellectual; and to teach them, by example as well as precept, all the things which he has commanded, and which are all, without exception, included in the double commandment, to love God above all things, and one's neighbour as oneself. This commandment was given to men that they might practise it in spirit and in truth to its fullest extent, and under all its aspects; that all might thus be one, by loving each other, and always acting towards one another as they would that others should act towards them.

Whatever efforts men may make to restrict the light, by only allowing those rays to shine forth which they wish to dispense, it must needs be that the Master's word shall spread, and be heard at every point of the globe; but before it can be received and bear fruit, it must be sustained by a lively, strong, and unalterable faith. It must not be only a feeling of empty pride, inspired in men by differences of religion. The Christianity of Christ is one, and one alone, for your planet and its humanity. It consists in practising charity under all its forms; and he who attains to this difficult point is a Christian—a Christian after Christ's own heart, and one of those who really walk in his ways.

(Mark xvi. 16.) "He who is baptized" (formerly a material rite, as an outward sign; now a moral action) is he who places himself truly under the protection of God and of the Master and Ruler of your planet; and under the influence and inspirations of the good spirits. But this baptism cannot exist unless he who asks for it has faith; for otherwise how would it avail him? Faith is the sister of Hope, and they are both the daughters of Charity and Love; and this Faith leads to works, and, when joined to works, is consummated by them.

He who believes this is saved. That is, he has no longer

to suffer the expiatory reincarnation reserved for guilty spirits, but he beholds new paths of purification and progress open before him by faith, by reincarnation in a world higher than that which he has left. He who does not believe this, and does not practise the sublime and simple morality of which Jesus is the personification, is condemned. That is, after suffering in the errant state the expiation which is appropriate to his faults or crimes, he suffers expiatory reincarnation with the object of reparation and progress, recommencing what has to be done over again.

“These signs shall follow those who believe ; in my name they shall cast out demons.” By the aid of superior spirits, supported, when needful, by that of the pure spirits, who are all able to drive away evil ones instantaneously from those who are obsessed or subjugated.

“They shall speak with new tongues.” Being rendered speaking mediums, under the influence and fluidic action of the good spirits.

“They shall take up serpents in their hands, and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them.” They shall be preserved by the action of the protecting spirits, who will annul the poison by means of appropriate fluids, invisibly employed to that end. Let not your physiologists and chemists who think themselves so wise, and are still completely ignorant of the nature and properties of fluids, deny this ; but they will long remain ignorant of the powers and the mysteries of the fluidic creation. To arrive at this result, humanity has much to labour, progress, and acquire, both morally and intellectually. You will learn more and more, as you advance with humility and simplicity inspired by charity and love, and with the desire of progress. You will advance by labour in the paths of light, knowledge, and truth, and thus in the knowledge of the laws of nature which govern the fluids, and their effects.

“They shall lay their hands on the sick, and they shall recover.” By the invisible aid of the good spirits who dispense purifying, regenerative, or strengthening fluids, fitted

to produce an instantaneous cure. Human magnetism works thus, under the secret agency of spirit-magnetism, by the will of man.

The words of Jesus (Mark xvi. 17, 18) were words of the present, or at least of the immediate future, and the Acts of the Apostles bear witness to their fulfilment. But his words were likewise words of the future; for the works which the Apostles accomplished will be reproduced among you at the appointed time.

"Jesus rose up towards heaven, and entered into a cloud which hid him from their eyes." Jesus rose above them into space, by laying aside his tangibility, but still remained visible. Then he disappeared as he entered the cloud, which had been formed of opaque fluids, by spiritual agency. It concealed him from their view, and he restored the fluids which had constituted his visible and perispiritic body to the sources whence he had drawn them.

"He ascended to heaven, and sat down on the right hand of God." You should understand the position which Jesus occupies, though it is not that of eternal inertia, as men have supposed. According to human ideas, the right hand is the place of honour. Jesus, who is entrusted with the charge of your development and progress, continues to prosecute his mission in space as one of the first ministers of God, as the protector and ruler of your planet, and watches over the purification and transformation both of the planet and of its humanity. After having brought your globe from the stage of incandescent fluids to the material condition in which it now exists, he came among you, clothed in a fluidic body, in harmony with his own spiritual nature, but also relatively in harmony with your sphere. As he himself promised and predicted, and as the "two men (or superior spirits) clothed in white," who appeared suddenly to his disciples, proclaimed,* Jesus will come again, and will descend from heaven in the same manner in which his disciples saw him ascend to the spiritual state. He shall

* Acts i. 10, 11.

descend from heaven on clouds ; but this time with great majesty, and in all his spiritual glory, when he shall have led you and your planet from the material state to the verge of the purely fluidic state, and when you are ready to attain perfection. He will then lead your world, now truly become "his kingdom," into the regions of pure fluids, where it will become one of the "kingdoms of the Father," where only pure spirits dwell, or can dwell.

END OF PART I.



CONTENTS OF VOL. II.

PART I.—(*Continued.*)

COMMENTARY ON THE GOSPELS OF MATTHEW, MARK, AND LUKE.

	PAGE
The Sabbath made for Man	1
Cure of the Man with the palsied hand, on the Sabbath	5
Mission of the Messiah	8
Blasphemy of the Pharisees	10
The Strong Man Armed—Blasphemy against the Holy Spirit—The Tree known by its Fruit	18
Sign demanded by the Pharisees	26
Evil Instincts and Passions	29
The Brother, Sister, and Mother of Jesus	34
Parable of the Sower	40
Parable of the Darnel in the Field	55
The Grain of Mustard Seed—The Leaven and the Meal—Seed sown in the Ground	57
Explanation of the Parable of the Darnel	64
The Hidden Treasure	70
The Pearl of Great Price	71
The Parable of the Fishing-net	71
A Prophet is not without Honour save in his own Country	72
Death of John the Baptist—Hebrew Belief in Reincarnation	74
Multiplication of the Loaves and Fishes	76
Jesus and Peter walking on the Lake	80

	PAGE
Touching the Dress of Jesus	84
Unwashed Hands—Real Impunity	85
The Canaanitish Woman	92
Cure of the Deaf Mute	95
Sick Persons Healed—The Seven Loaves	97
The Pharisees and Sadducees ask for a Sign	99
Leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees	100
Cure of a Blind Man	101
Reincarnation—Mission of Peter	106
Jesus foretells his Death, and rebukes Peter	123
The Kingdom of God	129
Transfiguration of Jesus	134
The Spirit of Elijah reincarnated as John the Baptist	148
The Lunatic—Prayer and Fasting	154
Jesus foretells his Death and Resurrection	164
Jesus pays Tithes	167
Lessons of Love, Charity, and Humility	169
Calling down Fire from Heaven	173
Offences	175
The Lost Sheep and the Lost Drachma	182
The Prodigal Son	186
Parable of the Unjust Steward	190
Conclusion of the Parable of the Unjust Steward	194
Pardon of Injuries	195
Duty and Humility	199
The Ten Lepers	200
The Kingdom of God	202
Signs of the Second Coming of Jesus	205
Binding and Loosing—Presence of Christ	211
Pardon of Injuries	221
The Law of Marriage	223
The Conditions of Marriage	231
Humility the source of all Virtue	239
Parable of the Widow and the Unjust Judge	240
The Pharisee and the Tax-gatherer	242
The Rich Young Man	243
Promises to the Apostles	248

	PAGE
Parable of the Labourers in the Vineyard	252
Jesus foretells his Crucifixion	258
The Sons of Zebedee	260
Conversion of Zacchæus	263
The Blind Men of Jericho Healed	264
Entry of Jesus into Jerusalem—The Temple Cleansed —Prophecy of the Destruction of Jerusalem	265
The Barren Fig-Tree	272
Jesus silences the Chief Priests and Elders	275
Parable of the Vineyard and the wicked Husbandmen	277
Continuation of the Parable of the Husbandmen in the Vineyard—Jesus the Chief Corner-Stone	281
Cure of Dropsy	284
Humility	285
Disinterestedness	286
Parable of the Feast	287
God and Cæsar	291
The Resurrection	295
Love of God and of the Neighbour	298
Parable of the Good Samaritan	301
Jesus at the House of Martha	303
Christ and David	305
Scribes and Pharisees	306
God alone is the Father, and Christ alone is the Teacher	307
Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites	308
Hypocritical Teachers	310
The Widow's Mite	314
End of the Age	315
Transformation of the Earth	321
False Christs—False Prophets	328
Signs of the Coming of Christ	331
Parable of the Fig-Tree	335
Times of Change Unknown	337
Need for Vigilance	341
Parable of the Faithful and Unfaithful Servants	342
Responsibility of the Spirit	344

	PAGE
Parable of the Ten Virgins	344
Watchfulness	346
Parable of the Talents	347
Parable of the Last Judgment	352
Perfume Poured on the Head of Jesus	358
Treachery of Judas	361
The Last Supper	366
Pride, Ambition, and Domination Forbidden	373
Predictions of Jesus	375
Jesus at the Garden of Gethsemane	377
Arrest of Jesus	384
Jesus before Caiaphas	389
Peter's Denial	391
Death of Judas	393
Jesus before Pilate	394
Insults to Jesus	398
Jesus led to Execution	399
Crucifixion of Jesus	401
Insults to Jesus on the Cross	403
The Penitent Thief	404
Apparent Death of Jesus	406
Earthquake and Prodigies	410
Burial of Jesus	413
The Stone Closing the Door of the Tomb Sealed and Guarded	413
Visit of the Women to the Tomb	416
Appearance of Jesus to the Two Disciples	434
Appearance of Jesus to the Apostles	437
The Ascension	440
<hr/>	
Contents of Vol. II.	449

WORKS BY ALLAN KARDEC.

THE SPIRIT'S BOOK.

Containing the Principles of Spiritist Doctrine on the Immortality of the Soul, &c. &c., according to the Teachings of Spirits of High Degree, transmitted through various mediums, collected and set in order by ALLAN KARDEC. Translated from the 120th thousand by ANNA BLACKWELL. Crown 8vo, cloth, 7s. 6d.

THE MEDIUM'S BOOK;

Or, Guide for Mediums and for Evocations. Containing the Theoretic Teachings of Spirits concerning all kinds of Manifestations, the Means of Communication with the Invisible World, the Development of Medianimity, &c. &c. By ALLAN KARDEC. Translated by ANNA BLACKWELL. Crown 8vo, cloth, 7s. 6d.

HEAVEN AND HELL;

Or, The Divine Justice Vindicated in the Plurality of Existences. By ALLAN KARDEC. Translated by ANNA BLACKWELL. Crown 8vo, cloth, 7s. 6d.

London : TRÜBNER & Co. Ludgate Hill.

THE PROBABLE EFFECT OF SPIRITISM UPON THE SOCIAL, MORAL, AND RELIGIOUS CONDITION OF SOCIETY.

A Prize Essay.

By ANNA BLACKWELL.

London : TRÜBNER & Co. Price 6d.





